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MARVEL CLASSICS COMICS
WAR OF THE WORLDS
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STAN LEE presents

WAR OF THE WORLDS

by H.G. Wells

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CONDOY
Lettering

BONNIE WILFORD
Coloring

RALPH MACCHIO
LEN GROW &
NORA MACLIN
Production &
Staff

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Herbert George Wells (H. G. Wells) was born in September of 1866 at Bromley, Kent, England. At an early age, he developed an interest in the natural sciences, particularly biology. He married early after becoming a pupil-teacher at age 17, but that marriage did not last. He left his past behind him, immediately becoming a successful journalist and short story writer and, eventually remarried (as it turned out, one of his previous biology students).

Much of H. G. Wells explorations into fiction, primarily his early novels, dealt with science fiction and veiled attempts at prophecy. Wells' scientific background added greatly to his success in this genre, as did his acute natural perception in the field of sociology, showing the depth of human response in what might otherwise be considered outrageous fantasy. His first such novel was THE TIME MACHINE (see Marvel Classic Comics #2). WAR OF THE WORLDS was third, following THE INVISIBLE MAN.

Because of his attempts at prophecy, Wells became a key member of the Fabian Society of London, where he would meet George Bernard Shaw. Shaw and Wells were often at odds and much of that period's experiences are recorded in Wells' novels ANN VERONICA and THE NEW MACHIAVELLI.

Wells also wrote a comprehensive OUTLINE OF HISTORY and some lesser known non-fiction works before he died in 1946.

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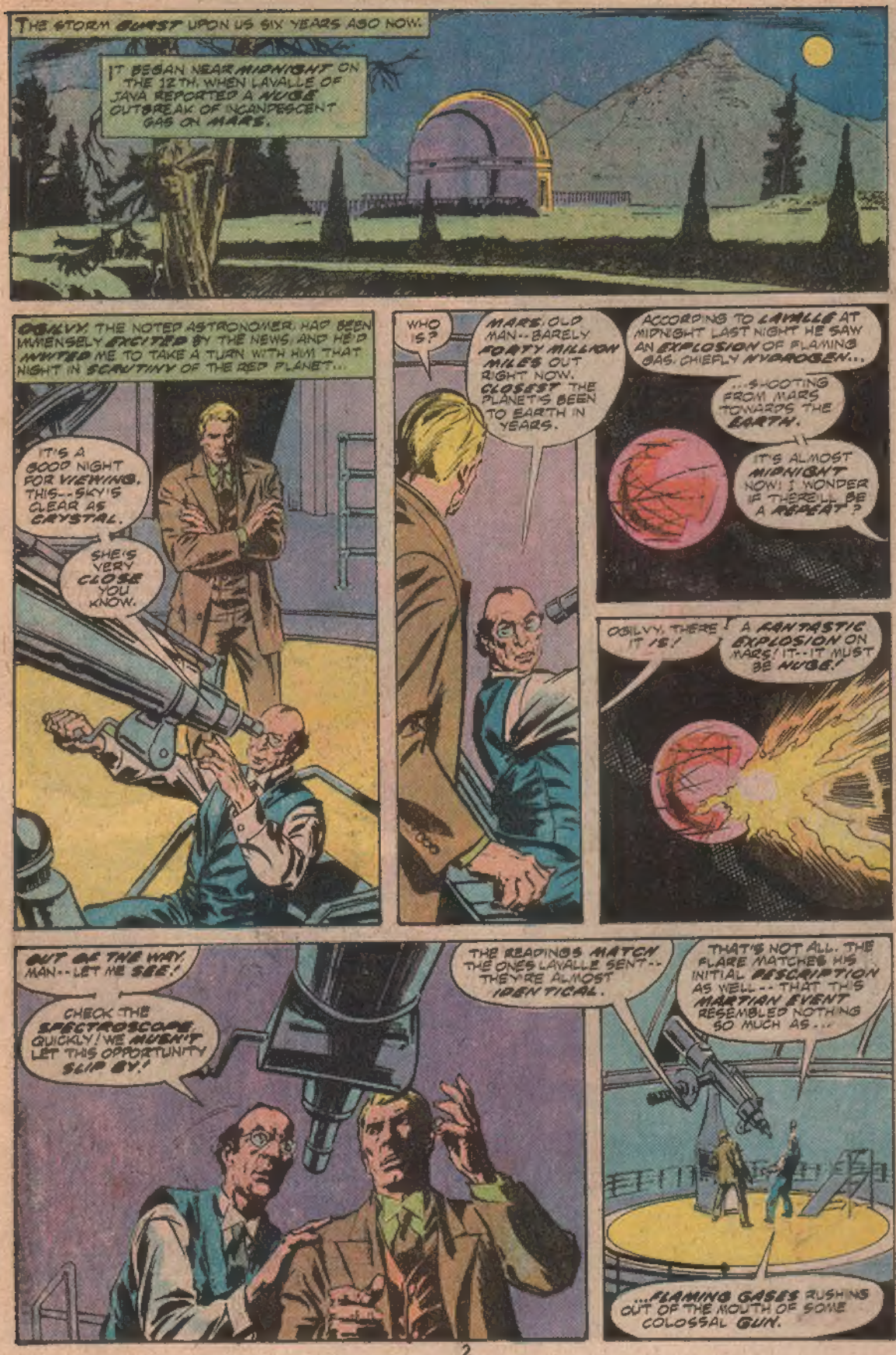
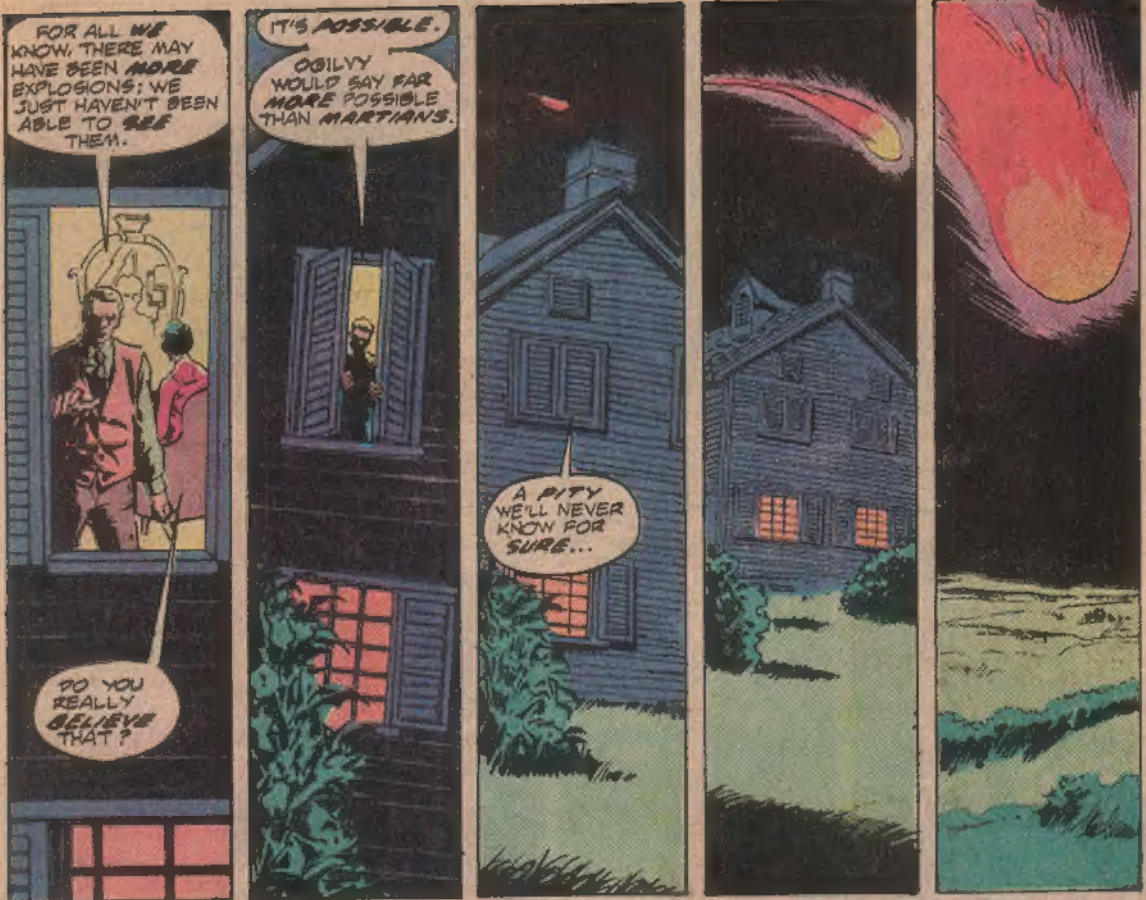
WAR OF THE WORLDS
by H.G. WELLS
NO ONE WOULD HAVE BELIEVED IN THE LAST YEARS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY THAT THIS WORLD WAS BEING WATCHED KEENLY AND CLOSELY BY INTELLIGENCES GREATER THAN MAN'S AND YET AS MORTAL AS HIS OWN...
WITH INFINITE COMPLACENCY MEN WENT TO AND FRO OVER THIS GLOBE ABOUT THEIR LITTLE AFFAIRS, SERENE IN THEIR ASSURANCE OF THEIR EMPIRE OVER MATTER.
NO ONE GAVE A THOUGHT TO THE OLDER WORLDS OF SPACE AS SOURCES OF HUMAN DANGER, OR THOUGHT OF THEM ONLY TO DISMISS THE IDEA OF LIFE UPON THEM AS IMPOSSIBLE OR IMPROBABLE.
YET ACROSS THE GULF OF SPACE, MINDS THAT ARE TO OUR MINDS AS OURS ARE TO THOSE OF THE BEASTS THAT PERISH, INTELLECTS VAST AND COOL AND UNSYMPATHETIC, REGARDED THIS EARTH WITH ENVIOUS EYES, AND SLOWLY AND SURELY DREW THEIR PLANS AGAINST US.
AND EARLY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY CAME THE GREAT DISILLUSIONMENT.

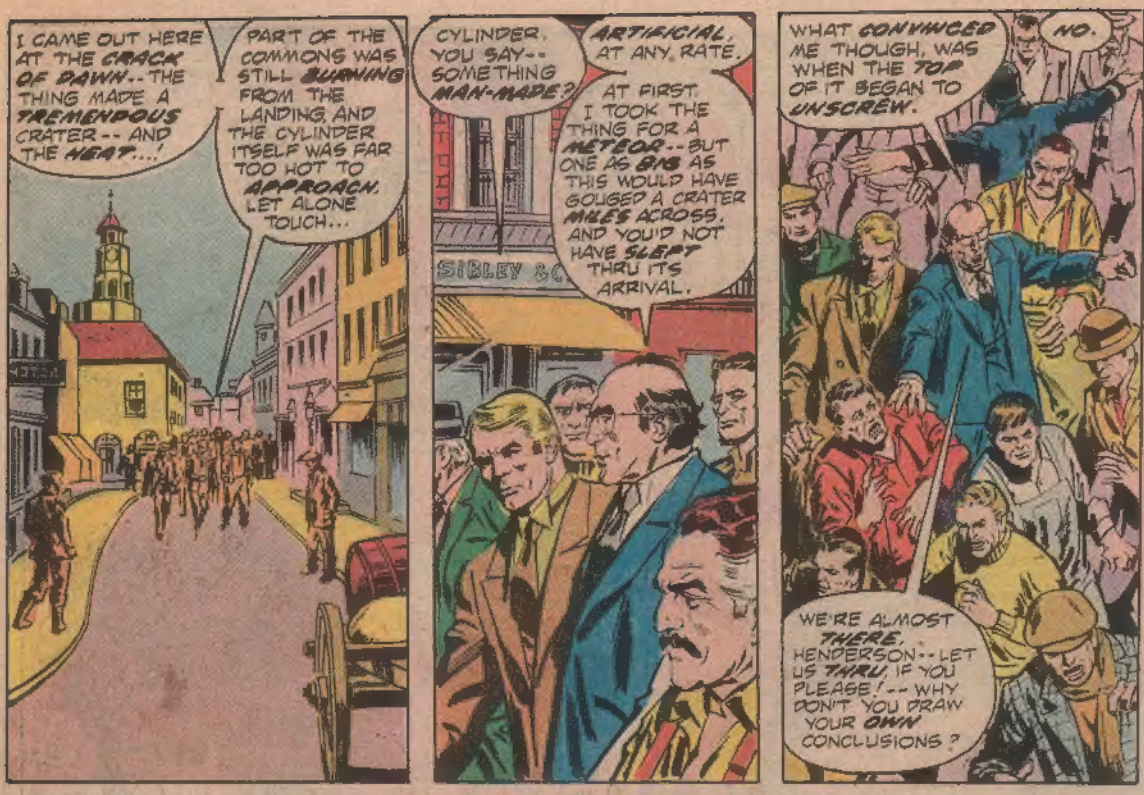

THE STORM BURST UPON US SIX YEARS AGO NOW.
IT BEGAN NEAR MIDNIGHT ON THE 12TH, WHEN LAVALLE OF JAVA REPORTED A HUGE OUTBREAK OF INCANDESCENT GAS ON MARS.
OGILVY, THE NOTED ASTRONOMER, HAD BEEN IMMENSELY EXCITED BY THE NEWS, AND HE'D INVITED ME TO TAKE A TURN WITH HIM THAT NIGHT IN SCRUTINY OF THE RED PLANET...
IT'S A GOOD NIGHT FOR VIEWING, THIS--SKY'S CLEAR AS CRYSTAL.
SHE'S VERY CLOSE YOU KNOW.
WHO IS?
MARS. OLD MAN--BARELY FORTY MILLION MILES OUT RIGHT NOW. CLOSEST THE PLANET'S BEEN TO EARTH IN YEARS.
ACCORDING TO LAVALLE AT MIDNIGHT LAST NIGHT HE SAW AN EXPLOSION OF FLAMING GAS, CHIEFLY HYDROGEN...
...SHOOTING FROM MARS TOWARDS THE EARTH.
IT'S ALMOST MIDNIGHT NOW! I WONDER IF THERE'LL BE A REPEAT?
OGILVY, THERE IT IS!
A FANTASTIC EXPLOSION ON MARS! IT--IT MUST BE HUGE!
OUT OF THE WAY, MAN--LET ME SEE!
CHECK THE SPECTROSCOPE, QUICKLY! WE MUSN'T LET THIS OPPORTUNITY SLIP BY!
THE READINGS MATCH THE ONES LAVALLE SENT--THEY'RE ALMOST IDENTICAL.
THAT'S NOT ALL. THE FLARE MATCHES HIS INITIAL DESCRIPTION AS WELL--THAT THIS MARTIAN EVENT RESEMBLED NOTHING SO MUCH AS...
...FLAMING GASES RUSHING OUT OF THE MOUTH OF SOME COLOSSAL GUN.

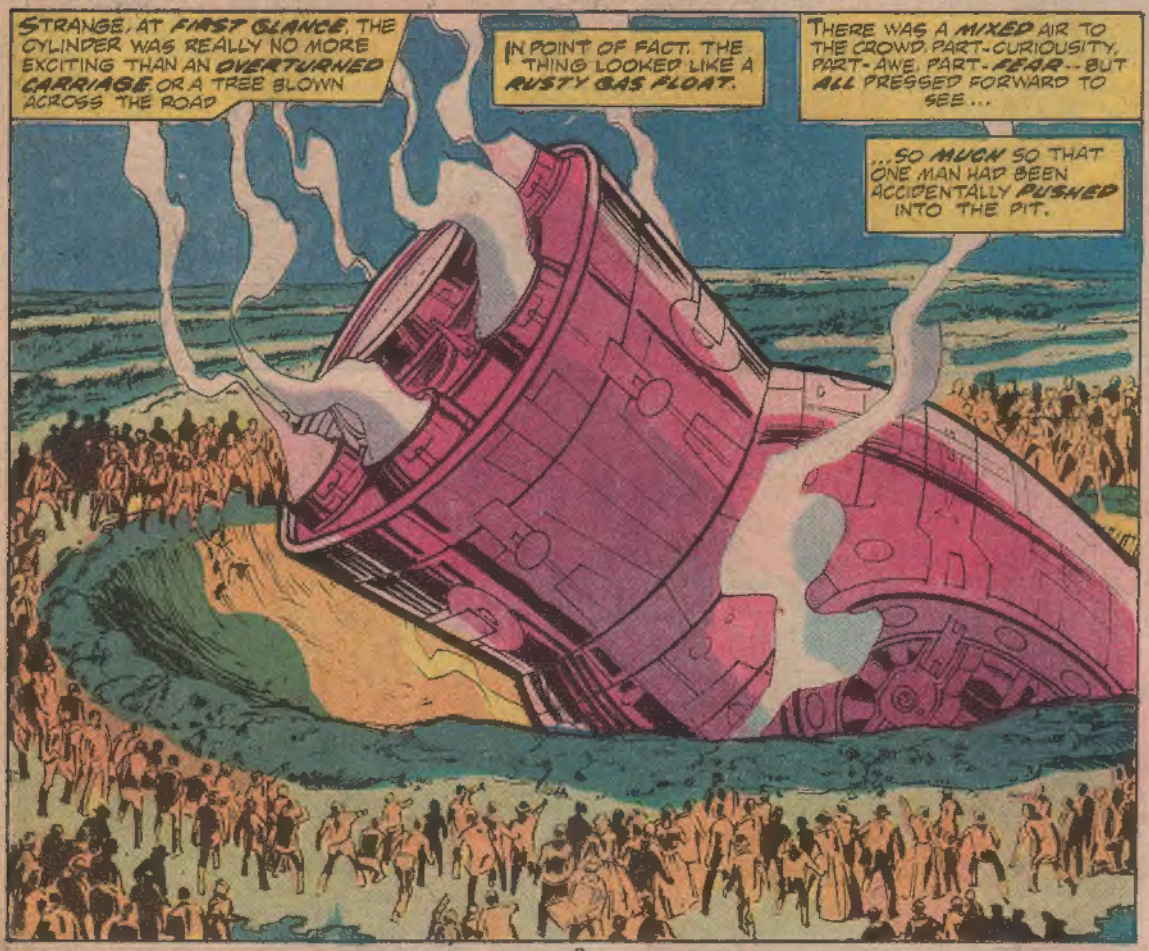
TELL ME, OGILVY -- DO YOU THINK THERE'S LIFE ON MARS?
INTELLIGENT LIFE? NO.
BUT THOSE LIGHTS -- THE GUN FLASHES WE'VE SEEN...
HYDROGEN EXPLOSIONS, IF YOU PLEASE. NOT "GUN FLASHES."
EXPLOSIONS CAUSED BY A HEAVY METEOR SHOWER, OR MASSIVE VOLCANIC ERUPTIONS. NATURAL PHENOMENA.
NOT MARTIANS SHOOTING AT US -- TRYING TO COMMUNICATE?
PLEASE, SPARE ME YET ANOTHER OF YOUR JULES VERNE FANTASIES.
THE POSSIBILITY OF ANYTHING MAN-LIKE HAVING EVOLVED ON MARS IS WELL OVER A MILLION-TO-ONE AGAINST.
...THEN, AS YOU KNOW, OGILVY SAID THE TWO EXPLOSIONS OCCURRING ON THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT WERE COINCIDENCE, NOTHING MORE.
AND YOU ACCEPT THAT WITHOUT QUESTION?
TWO SUCH "COINCIDENCES" I MIGHT CONCEDE. EVEN THREE.
BUT TEN?!
TEN MASSIVE EXPLOSIONS OCCURRING NIGHT AFTER NIGHT LIKE CLOCKWORK?
COINCIDENCE?
WHO CAN TRULY SAY, MY DEAR? THE LAST SUCH BLAST WAS SEEN OVER A FORTNIGHT AGO...
...AND EVER SINCE THAT TIME, MASSIVE DUST-STORMS HAVE SHROUDED MARS FROM POLE TO POLE, MAKING OBSERVATION IMPOSSIBLE.


FOR ALL WE KNOW, THERE MAY HAVE BEEN MORE EXPLOSIONS; WE JUST HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO SEE THEM.
DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT?
IT'S POSSIBLE.
OGILVY WOULD SAY FAR MORE POSSIBLE THAN MARTIANS.
A PITY WE'LL NEVER KNOW FOR SURE...

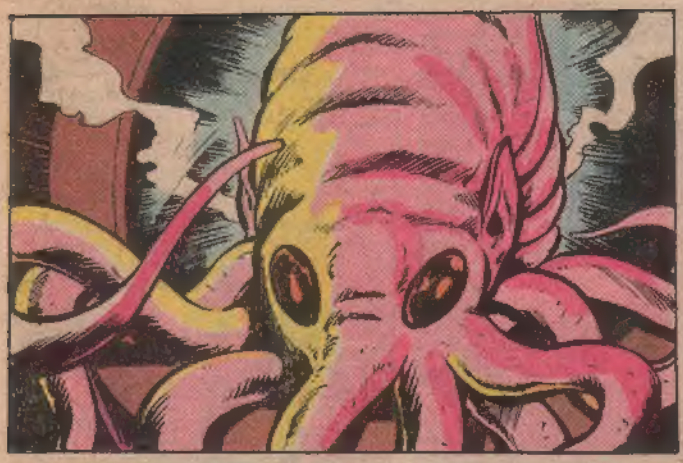
TH-DOOOM

HENDERSON! IT'S INCREDIBLE-- ABSOLUTELY UNBELIEVABLE!
THE SHOOTING STAR THAT FELL LAST NIGHT--IT'S LANDED IN HORSELL COMMON!
EH?
YOU MUST CONTACT YOUR NEWSPAPER; THE LANDING MUST BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY--
--BECAUSE FANTASTIC AS THIS MAY SOUND, THE--THE METEOR, THE OBJECT IS ARTIFICIAL!
IT'S A CYLINDER MAN--
--AND I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING-- SOMEONE-- INSIDE!
WHAT?!?
HEY, WHAT'S ALL THE RUCKUS? DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME OF THE MORNING THIS IS--?!
OH, HULLO, OGILVY--WHAT'S GOING ON?
COME DOWN, MY FRIEND--YOU MUST COME DOWN.
IN MY NIGHT-CLOTHES?
OH, BOTHER! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M SAYING?
NOT PRECISELY.
THEN COME OUT TO THE COMMONS WITH ME, YOU FOOL, AND SEE FOR YOURSELF!
IT...IT'S WONDERFUL!
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT--I'LL BE RIGHT DOWN. JUST GIVE ME A MOMENT TO CHANGE.


I CAME OUT HERE AT THE CRACK OF DAWN--THE THING MADE A TREMENDOUS CRATER--AND THE HEAT...!
PART OF THE COMMONS WAS STILL BURNING FROM THE LANDING, AND THE CYLINDER ITSELF WAS FAR TOO HOT TO APPROACH, LET ALONE TOUCH...
CYLINDER, YOU SAY--SOMETHING MAN-MADE?
ARTIFICIAL, AT ANY RATE.
AT FIRST, I TOOK THE THING FOR A METEOR--BUT ONE AS BIG AS THIS WOULD HAVE GOUGED A CRATER MILES ACROSS, AND YOU'D NOT HAVE SLEPT THRU ITS ARRIVAL.
SIBLEY &C
WHAT CONVINCED ME THOUGH, WAS WHEN THE TOP OF IT BEGAN TO UNSCREW.
NO.
WE'RE ALMOST THERE, HENDERSON--LET US THRU, IF YOU PLEASE!--WHY DON'T YOU DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSIONS?

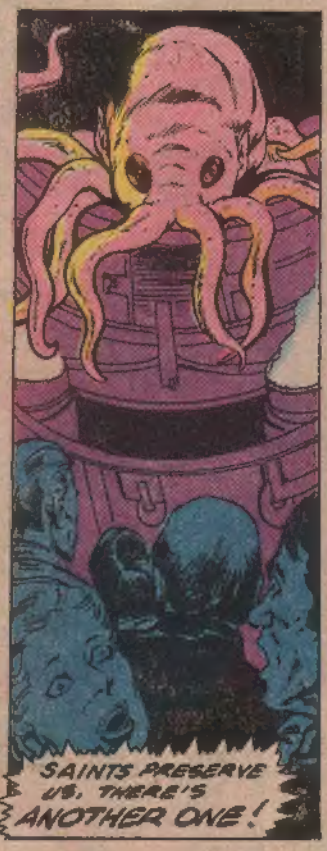

STRANGE, AT FIRST GLANCE, THE CYLINDER WAS REALLY NO MORE EXCITING THAN AN OVERTURNED CARRIAGE OR A TREE BLOWN ACROSS THE ROAD
IN POINT OF FACT, THE THING LOOKED LIKE A RUSTY GAS FLOAT.
THERE WAS A MIXED AIR TO THE CROWD, PART-CURIOUSITY, PART-AWE, PART-FEAR--BUT ALL PRESSED FORWARD TO SEE...
...SO MUCH SO THAT ONE MAN HAD BEEN ACCIDENTALLY PUSHED INTO THE PIT.

SUDDENLY...
OGILVY GEORGE.. LOOK!
GOOD LORD.
THE CYLINDER-- THE TOP'S BEING UNSCREWED EVEN MORE...AND FROM WITHIN.'
OGILVY, YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME-- THERE'S A MAN DOWN IN THE PIT, OGILVY!
I KNOW.. IT'S THIS BLASTED CROWD!
HENDERSON. HELP US KEEP THESE CONFOUNDED PEOPLE BACK! AFTER ALL, WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S IN THE CONFOUNDED THING!
WE'LL KNOW SOON ENOUGH. I'M AFRAID. THE SCREW'S OFF.
CAN YOU SEE ANYTHING?
NO. THE SUN'S IN MY EYES.
I HAD EXPECTED TO SEE A MAN EMERGE...
...OR SOMETHING ESSENTIALLY MAN-LIKE, AT ANY RATE.
I THINK WE ALL HAD.



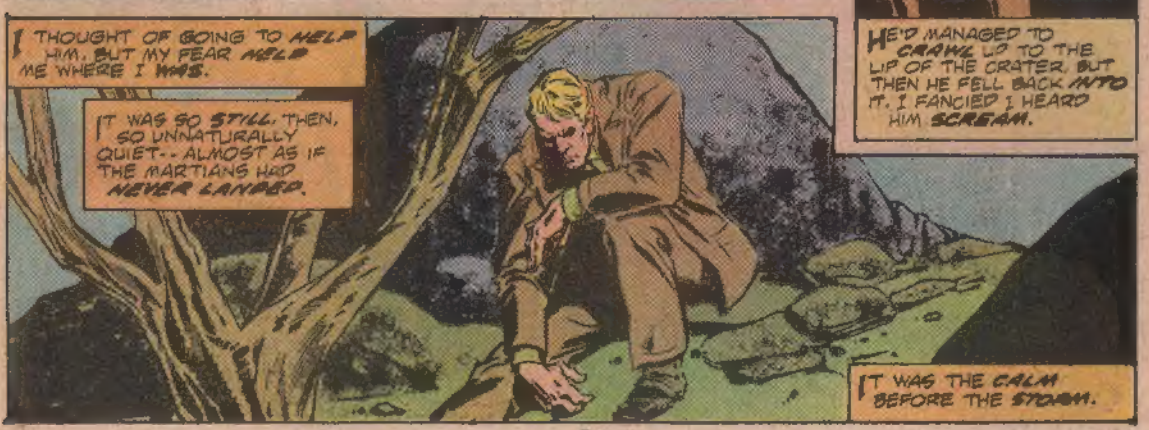
OH MY GOD.

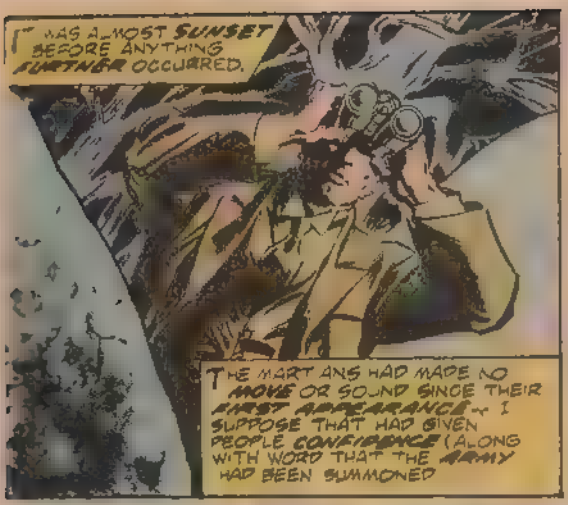
ARRROOO--!
THUD.

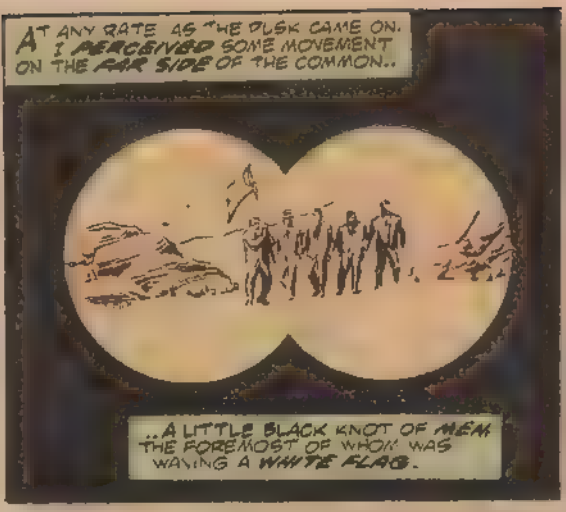

SAINTS PRESERVE US, THERE'S ANOTHER ONE!

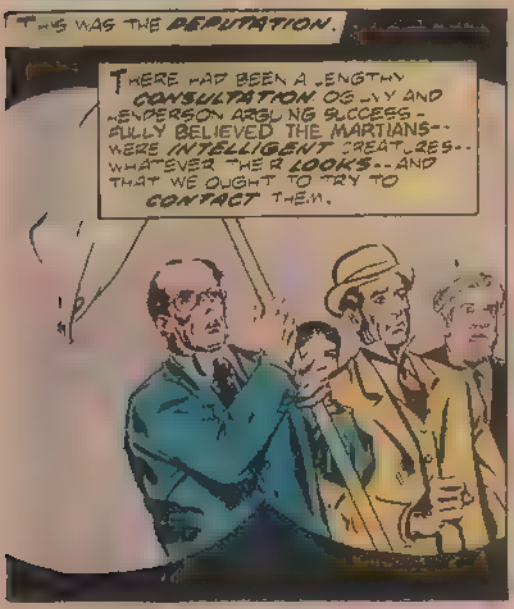
I WAS OVERCOME BY DISGUST AND DREAD AT MY FIRST SIGHT OF A MARTIAN (FOR MARTIANS I INSTINCTIVELY KNEW THEY WERE)...
...AND SO, I TURNED AND RAN. WE ALL DID.

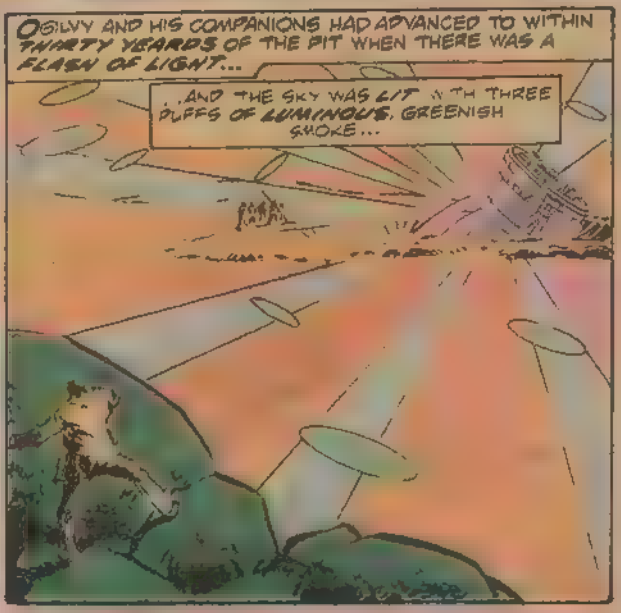
IT WAS ONLY WHEN I HAD FOUND SOME "COVER" THAT I REMEMBERED THE YOUNG MAN IN THE PIT...


I THOUGHT OF GOING TO HELP HIM. BUT MY FEAR HELD ME WHERE I WAS.
IT WAS SO STILL. THEN, SO UNNATURALLY QUIET-- ALMOST AS IF THE MARTIANS HAD NEVER LANDED.
HE'D MANAGED TO CRAWL UP TO THE LIP OF THE CRATER. BUT THEN HE FELL BACK INTO IT. I FANCIED I HEARD HIM SCREAM.
IT WAS THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM.


IT WAS ALMOST SUNSET BEFORE ANYTHING FURTHER OCCURRED.
THE MARTIANS HAD MADE NO MOVE OR SOUND SINCE THEIR FIRST APPEARANCE -- I SUPPOSE THAT HAD GIVEN PEOPLE CONFIDENCE (ALONG WITH WORD THAT THE ARMY HAD BEEN SUMMONED


AT ANY RATE AS THE DUSK CAME ON. I PERCEIVED SOME MOVEMENT ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE COMMON..
..A LITTLE BLACK KNOT OF MEN. THE FOREMOST OF WHOM WAS WAVING A WHITE FLAG.

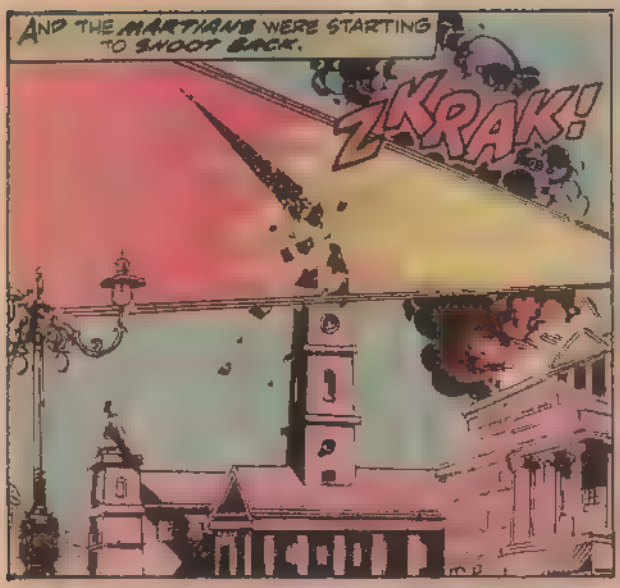

THIS WAS THE DEPUTATION.
THERE HAD BEEN A LENGTHY CONSULTATION OGILVY AND HENDERSON ARGUING SUCCESSFULLY BELIEVED THE MARTIANS-- WERE INTELLIGENT CREATURES.. WHATEVER THEY LOOKS--AND THAT WE OUGHT TO TRY TO CONTACT THEM.


OGILVY AND HIS COMPANIONS HAD ADVANCED TO WITHIN THIRTY YEARDS OF THE PIT WHEN THERE WAS A FLASH OF LIGHT...
..AND THE SKY WAS LIT WITH THREE PUFFS OF LUMINOUS, GREENISH SMOKE...

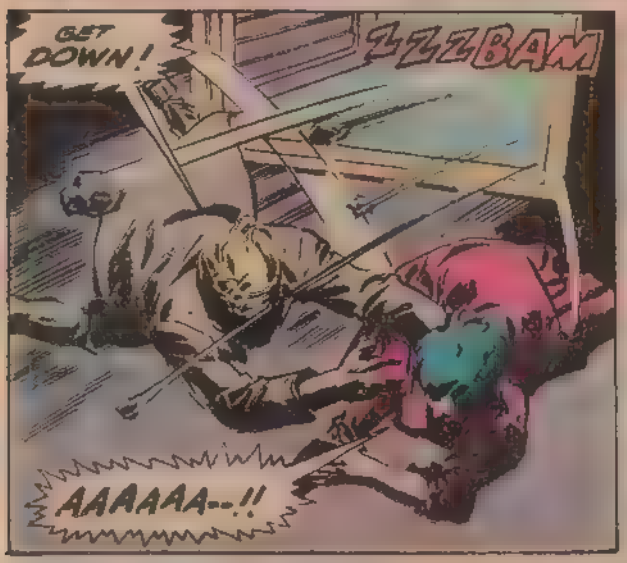
AND THEN.. THEY ... DIED.
SSZZRAAMM

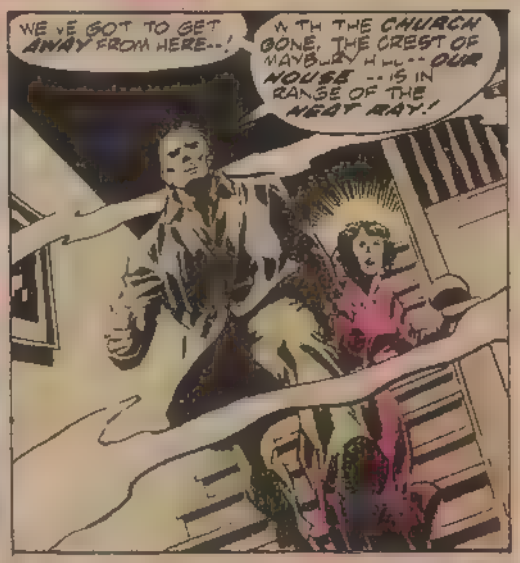
DARK... IT WAS DARK AGAIN AND YET THAT DARKNESS ONE COULD ALMOST SEE WAS THAT NOTHING HAD HAPPENED.
A GROUP OF BLACK SPECKS CARRYING A FLAG OF WHITE HAD BEEN SWEPT OUT OF EXISTENCE AND THE STILLNESS OF THE EVENING HAD BARELY BEEN BROKEN.
IT CAME TO ME THAT I WAS ALONE UPON THIS DARK COMMON ALONE AND HELPLESS.
SUDDENLY LIKE A THING FALLING UPON ME FROM WITHOUT CAME--
AND SO I TURNED FROM THE GRAVE OF MY FRIEND'S DEATHS..
AND AGAIN.
I'D GONE AS FAR AS COBHAM BEFORE I ENCOUNTERED ANY PEOPLE
ODDLY ENOUGH THEY WERE SOLDIERS.
THEY WERE PART OF THE CARDIGAN REGIMENT FROM ISHERMAN BARRACKS, DEPLOYED IN RESPONSE TO OGILVY'S REPORT OF [redacted] WITHIN THE CYLINDER.
EVIDENTLY THEY'D BEEN BUSY DURING THE HOURS I'D WANDERED THE COMMON AFTER SEEING THE HEAT RAY IN ACTION-- SO MUCH SO THAT THEY'D ALREADY LOST TWO SCOUT PARTIES.
AS YET THOUGH THEY HADN'T SEEN THE HEAT RAY IN ACTION.
EVEN SO THEY WERE CONFIDENT OF VICTORY.

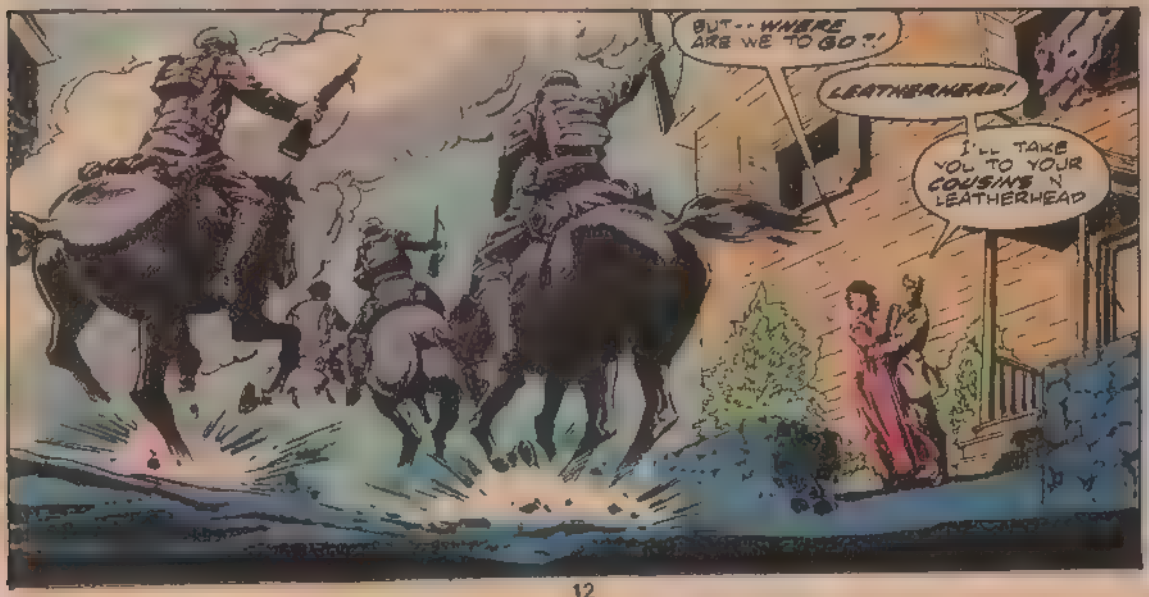
HEY LOOK A THA-!
A SHOOTIN' STAR WHAT DO IT TOM?
HEADIN' NORTH-WEST BY MY RECKON N... INTO THE PINEY-WOODS ABOVE WOKING.
DO... ANY OF YOU HAVE THE TIME?
BOUT MIDNIGHT I'M THINKIN'; WHY?
THEN THAT ISN'T JUST A SHOOTING STAR.
IT'S THE MARTIANS SECOND CYLINDER --FIRED EXACTLY TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AFTER THE FIRST.
AND IT'S ARRIVAL MEANS WE CAN EXPECT EIGHT MORE.
SATURDAY LIVES IN MY MEMORY AS A DAY OF SUSPENSE IT WAS A HOT DAY MUGGY THE AIR CLOSE AND STIFLING.
THE MILKMAN CAME AS USUAL, AND MY NEIGHBORS VOICED THE OPINION THAT THE TROOPS WOULD BE ABLE TO CAPTURE OR KILL THE MARTIANS DURING THE DAY.
I MUST CONFESS THAT THE SIGHT OF ALL THIS ARMAMENT AND PREPARATION GREATLY EXCITED ME. MY IMAGINATION BECAME BELLIGERANT AND DEFEATED THE INVADERS IN A DOZEN DIFFERENT WAYS.
INDEED, WHEN I WAS DONE IT HARDLY SEEMED A FAIR FIGHT.
YET THE MARTIANS TOOK AS MUCH NOTICE OF OUR ACTIONS AS WE WOULD OF THE LOWING OF A COW. UNTIL SIX O'CLOCK...
DID YOU HEAR THAT, MY DEAR? IT SOUNDS LIKE THUNDER.
THERE'S A STORM BREWING RIGHT ENOUGH, BUT YOUR SOUNDS ARE COMING FROM THE OTHER DIRECTION, FROM THE COMMON!
THOSE ARE GUNS.' THE SOLDIERS MUST BE FIRING ON THE MARTIANS!


AND THE MARTIANS WERE STARTING TO SHOOT BACK.
ZKRAK!

GOOD LORD
IT WAS HORRIBLE, THE HEAT-RAY AS TERRIFYING NOW AS T HAD BEEN ON THE COMMON
THE FACT THAT BUILDINGS WERE BE NG DESTROYED NOW NSTEAD OF MEN MADE NO DIFFERENCE.


GET DOWN!
ZZZBAM
AAAAAA--!!


WE VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM HERE--!
W TH THE CHURCH GONE, THE CREST OF MAYBURY HILL -- OUR HOUSE -- IS IN RANGE OF THE HEAT RAY.!


BUT -- WHERE ARE WE TO GO ?!
LEATHERHEAD!
I'LL TAKE YOU TO YOUR COUSINS N LEATHERHEAD

I MANAGED TO SECURE A HORSE AND DOG-CART FROM THE INNKEEPER OF THE SPOTTED DOG--OUR LOCAL PUBLIC HOUSE--

--AND AMID ALL THE FARE AND SMOKE AND CONFUSION MY WIFE AND I WERE AWAY.

THE SMOKE OF THE BATTLE--IF IT COULD BE CALLED SUCH--ALREADY EXTENDED FAR AWAY TO THE EAST AND WEST, THE ROAD BECOMING DOTTED WITH PEOPLE RUNNING AFTER US.

RZZRAT!

THE FIRING HAS STOPPED, AS WELL.

LEATHERHEAD IS ABOUT TWELVE MILES FROM MAYBURY HILL AND WE REACHED THERE WITHOUT MISADVENTURE AROUND NINE O' CLOCK.

MY WIFE WAS CURIOUSLY SILENT THROUGHOUT THE DRIVE--SHE SEEMED OPPRESSED WITH FORSBODINGS OF EVIL.

I LEFT HER AT E..EVEN, HAVING PROMISED THE INNKEEPER TO RETURN HIS CART, SENSING--AS I WENT--THAT MY WIFE WANTED ME TO STAY.

WOULD THAT I HAD.

I WAS ALMOST HOME WHEN THE STORM AND THE THIRD FALLING STAR BROKE TOGETHER...

...THE COMBINATION OF LIGHT AND SOUND SENDING MY HORSE INTO A PANIC. HE TOOK THE BIT BETWEEN HIS TEETH AND BOLTED.

HE HEADED DOWN MAYBURY HILL AT AN INCREDIBLE PACE AND I WAS HARD PUT TO MAINTAIN MY SEAT, LET ALONE REGAIN CONTROL OF THE CART.

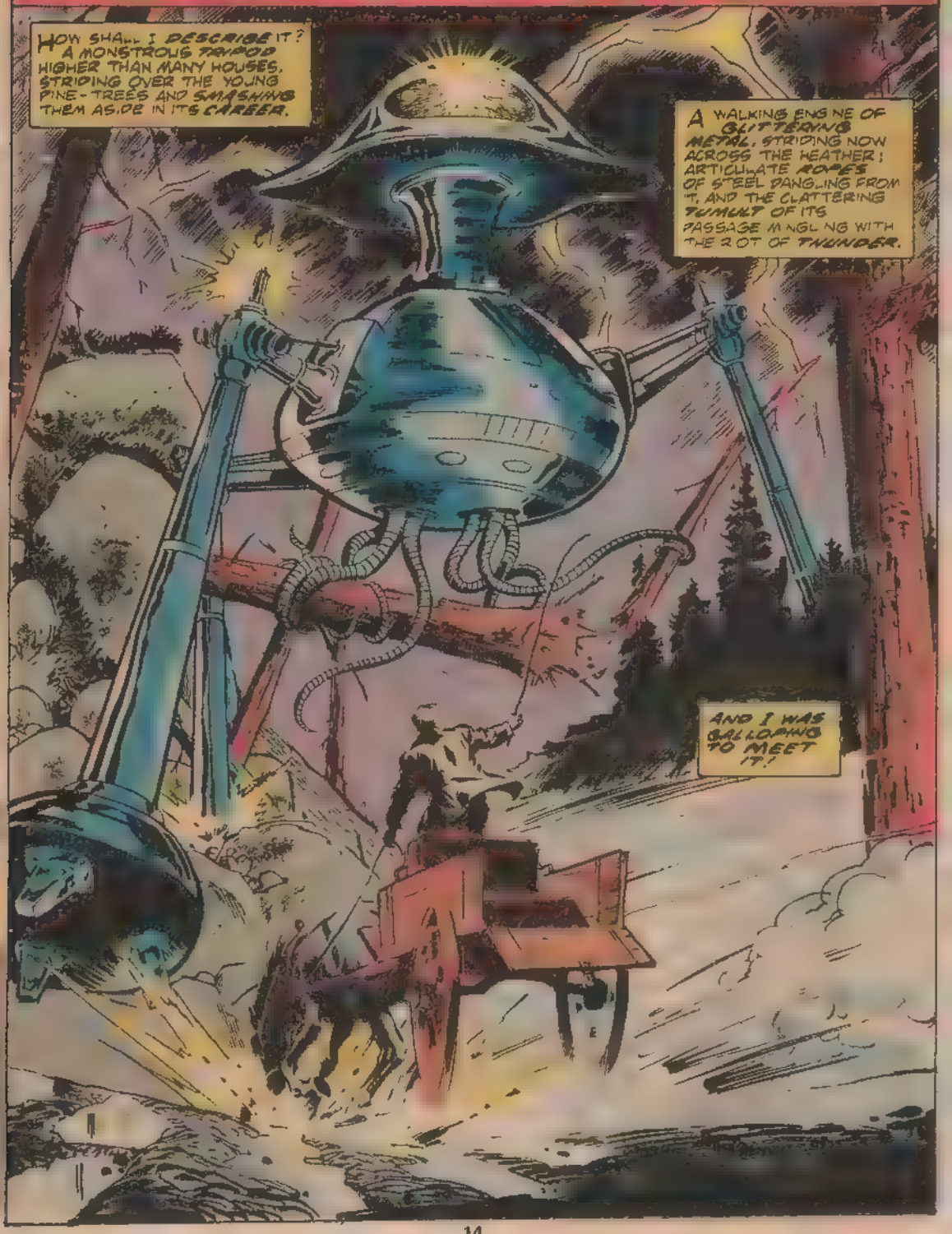
THROUGH ALL THIS MADNESS, HOWEVER, MY EYES KEPT CATCHING SIGHT OF SOMETHING MOVING DOWN THE OPPOSITE SLOPE TOWARDS ME.

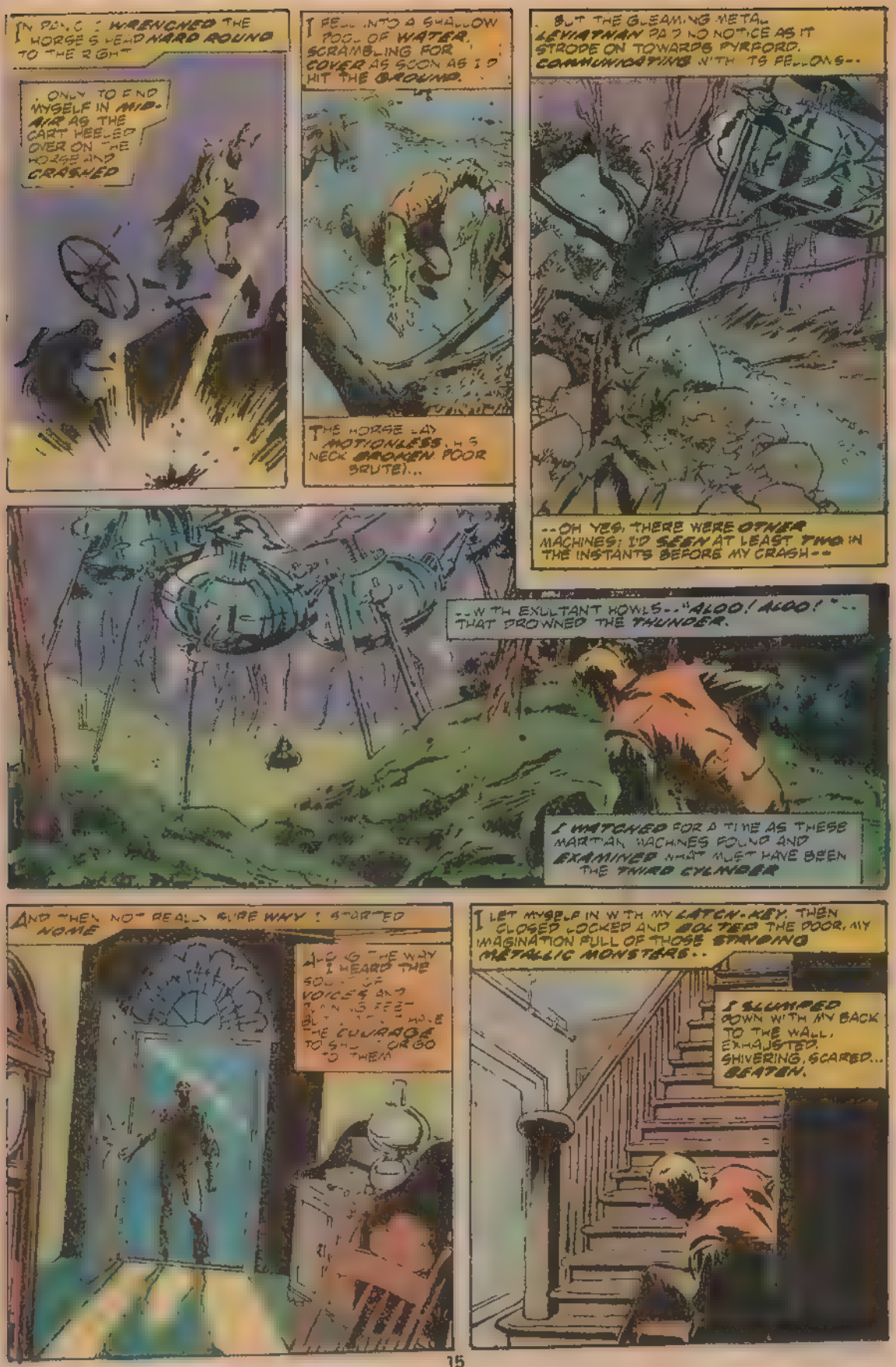
SOMETHING HUGE...

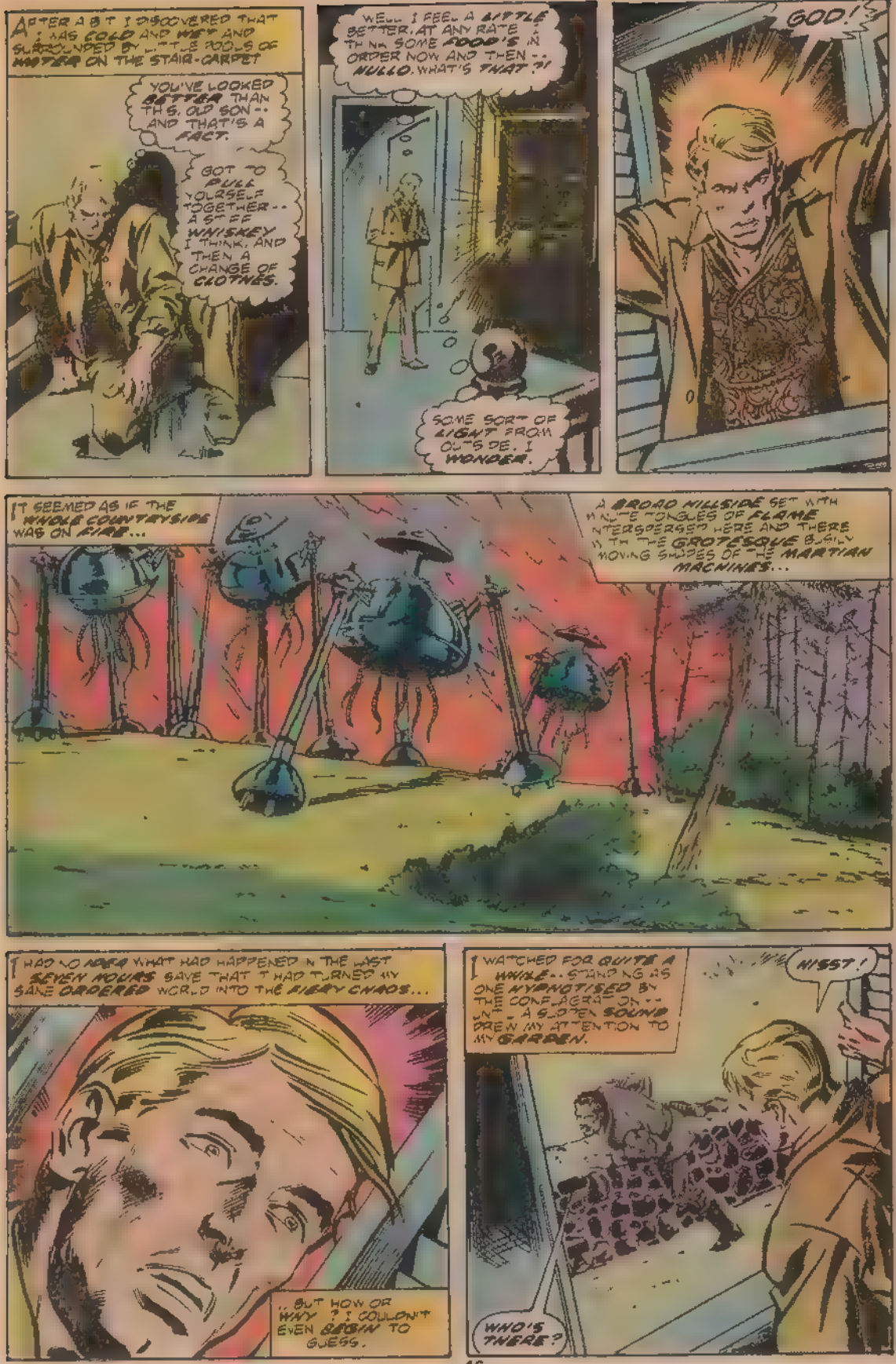
...AND... ALIEN.

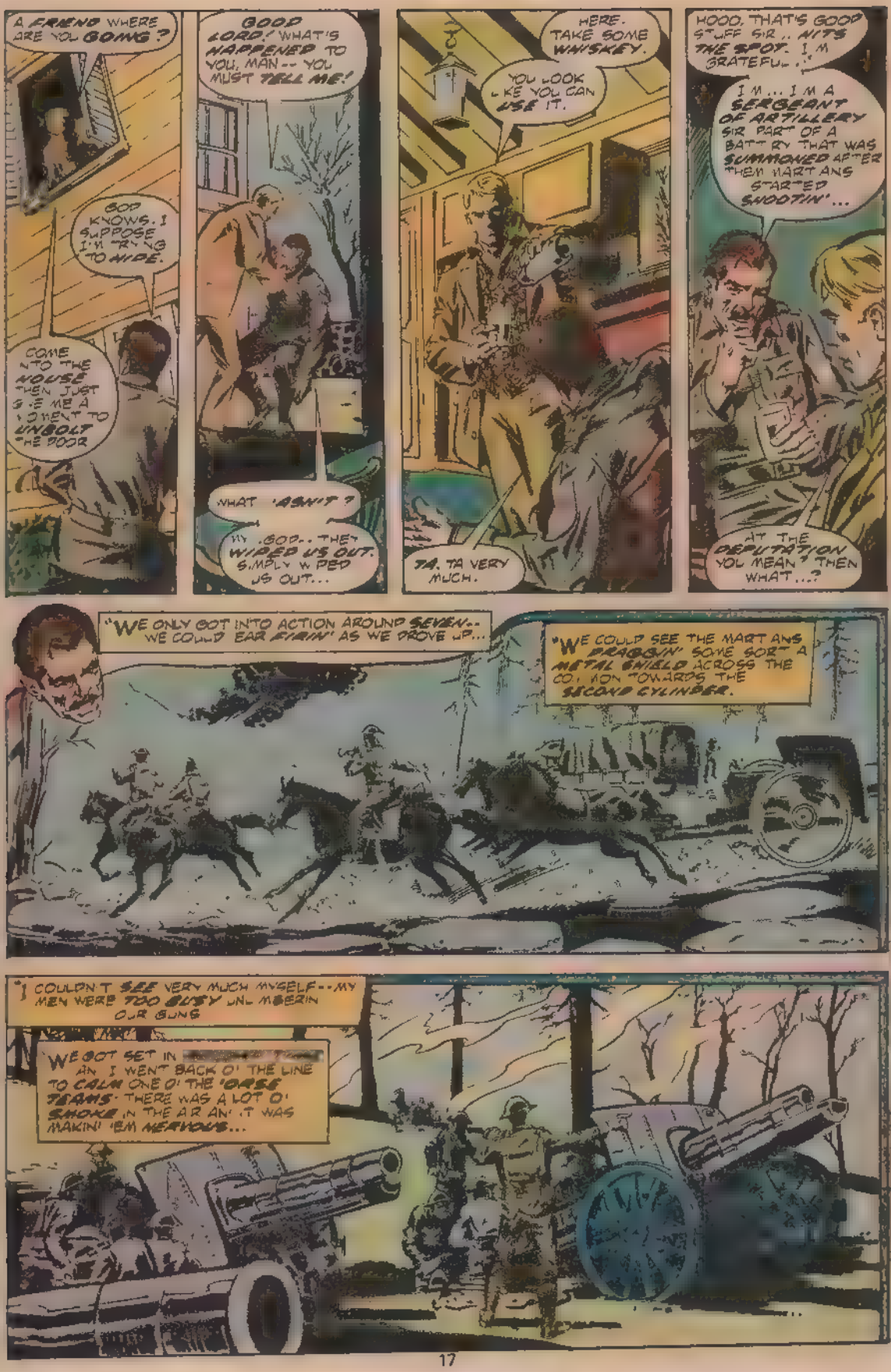
PART II

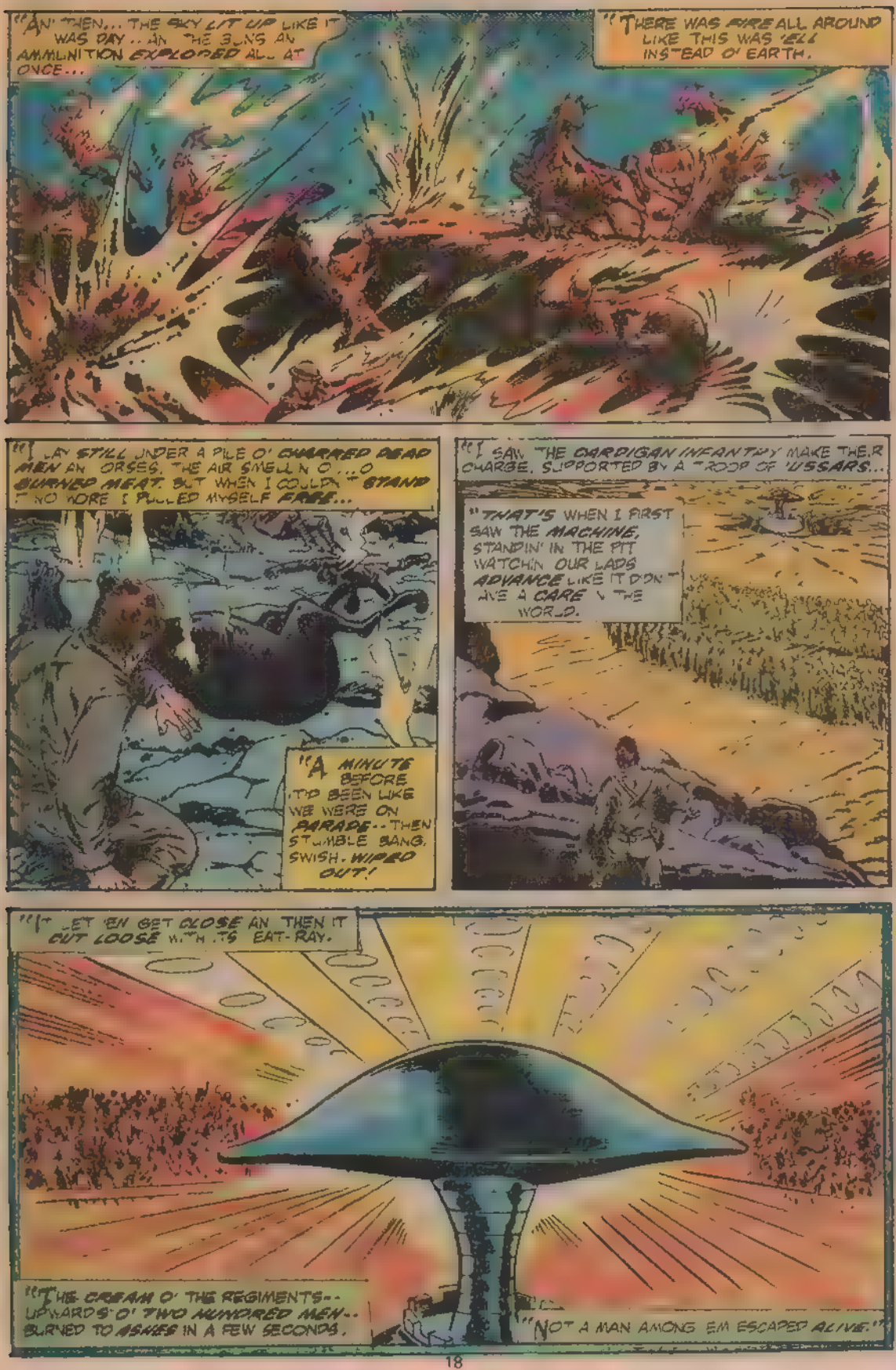
THE CONQUEST OF EARTH!


HOW SHALL I DESCRIBE IT? A MONSTROUS TRIPOD HIGHER THAN MANY HOUSES, STRIDING OVER THE YOUNG PINE-TREES AND SMASHING THEM ASIDE IN ITS CAREER.
A WALKING ENGINE OF GLITTERING METAL, STRIDING NOW ACROSS THE HEATHER; ARTICULATE ROPES OF STEEL DANGLING FROM IT, AND THE CLATTERING TUMULT OF ITS PASSAGE MINGLING WITH THE ROT OF THUNDER.
AND I WAS GALLOPING TO MEET IT!

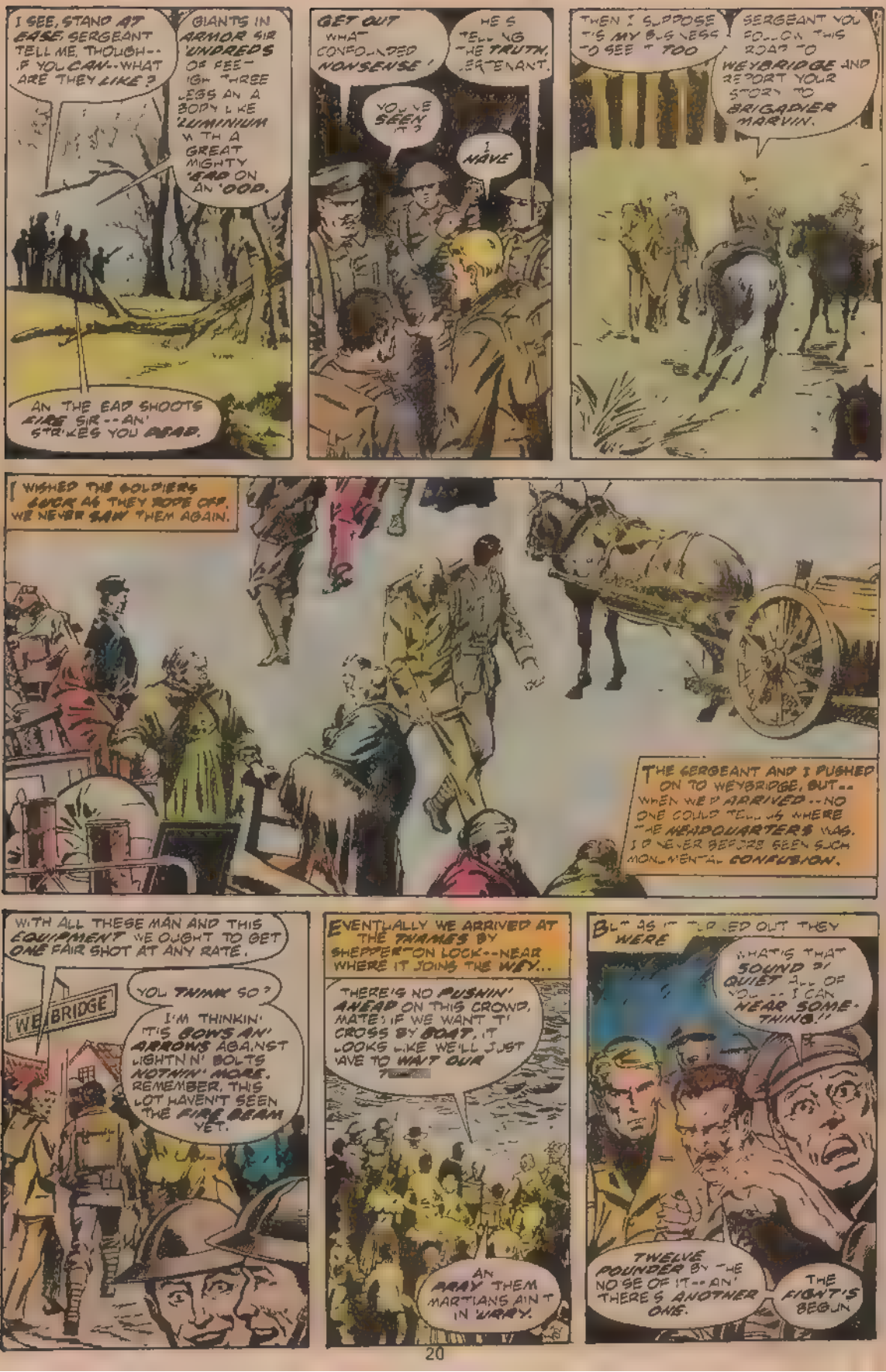

IN PANIC I WRENCHED THE HORSE'S HEAD HARD ROUND TO THE RIGHT
ONLY TO END MYSELF IN MID-AIR AS THE CART WHEELED OVER ON THE HORSE AND CRASHED
I FELL INTO A SHALLOW POOL OF WATER, SCRAMBLING FOR COVER AS SOON AS I'D HIT THE GROUND.
THE HORSE LAY MOTIONLESS, HIS NECK BROKEN (POOR BRUTE)...
BUT THE GLEAMING METAL LEVIATHAN PAID NO NOTICE AS IT STRODE ON TOWARDS PYRFORD, COMMUNICATING WITH ITS FELLOWS--
--OH YES, THERE WERE OTHER MACHINES; I'D SEEN AT LEAST TWO IN THE INSTANTS BEFORE MY CRASH--
--WITH EXULTANT HOWLS--"ALOO! ALOO!"--THAT DROWNED THE THUNDER.
I WATCHED FOR A TIME AS THESE MARTIAN MACHINES FOUND AND EXAMINED WHAT MUST HAVE BEEN THE THIRD CYLINDER
AND THEN NOT REALLY SURE WHY I STARTED HOME
AND SO THE WAY I HEARD THE SOUND OF VOICES AND [illegible] THE CURRAGH TO SHORE OR GO TO THEM
I LET MYSELF IN WITH MY LATCH-KEY, THEN CLOSED LOCKED AND BOLTED THE DOOR, MY IMAGINATION FULL OF THOSE STRONG METALLIC MONSTERS..
I SLUMPED DOWN WITH MY BACK TO THE WALL, EXHAUSTED, SHIVERING, SCARED... BEATEN.


AFTER A BIT I DISCOVERED THAT I WAS COLD AND WET AND SURROUNDED BY LITTLE POOLS OF WATER ON THE STAIR-CARPET
YOU'VE LOOKED BETTER THAN THIS, OLD SON -- AND THAT'S A FACT.
GOT TO PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER -- A STIFF WHISKEY I THINK, AND THEN A CHANGE OF CLOTHES.
WELL I FEEL A LITTLE BETTER, AT ANY RATE. THERE'S SOME FOOD'S IN ORDER NOW AND THEN -- HULLO. WHAT'S THAT ?!
SOME SORT OF LIGHT FROM OUTSIDE. I WONDER.
GOD!
IT SEEMED AS IF THE WHOLE COUNTRYSIDE WAS ON FIRE...
A BROAD HILLSIDE SET WITH WHITE TONGUES OF FLAME INTERSPERSED HERE AND THERE WITH THE GROTESQUE BUSILY MOVING SHAPES OF THE MARTIAN MACHINES...
I HAD NO IDEA WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN THE LAST SEVEN HOURS SAVE THAT I HAD TURNED MY SANE ORDERED WORLD INTO THE FIERY CHAOS...
.. BUT HOW OR WHY ? I COULDN'T EVEN BEGIN TO GUESS.
I WATCHED FOR QUITE A WHILE.. STUNNED AS ONE HYPNOTISED BY THE CONFLAGRATION -- UNTIL A SLITHERING SOUND DREW MY ATTENTION TO MY GARDEN.
HISST !
WHO'S THERE ?

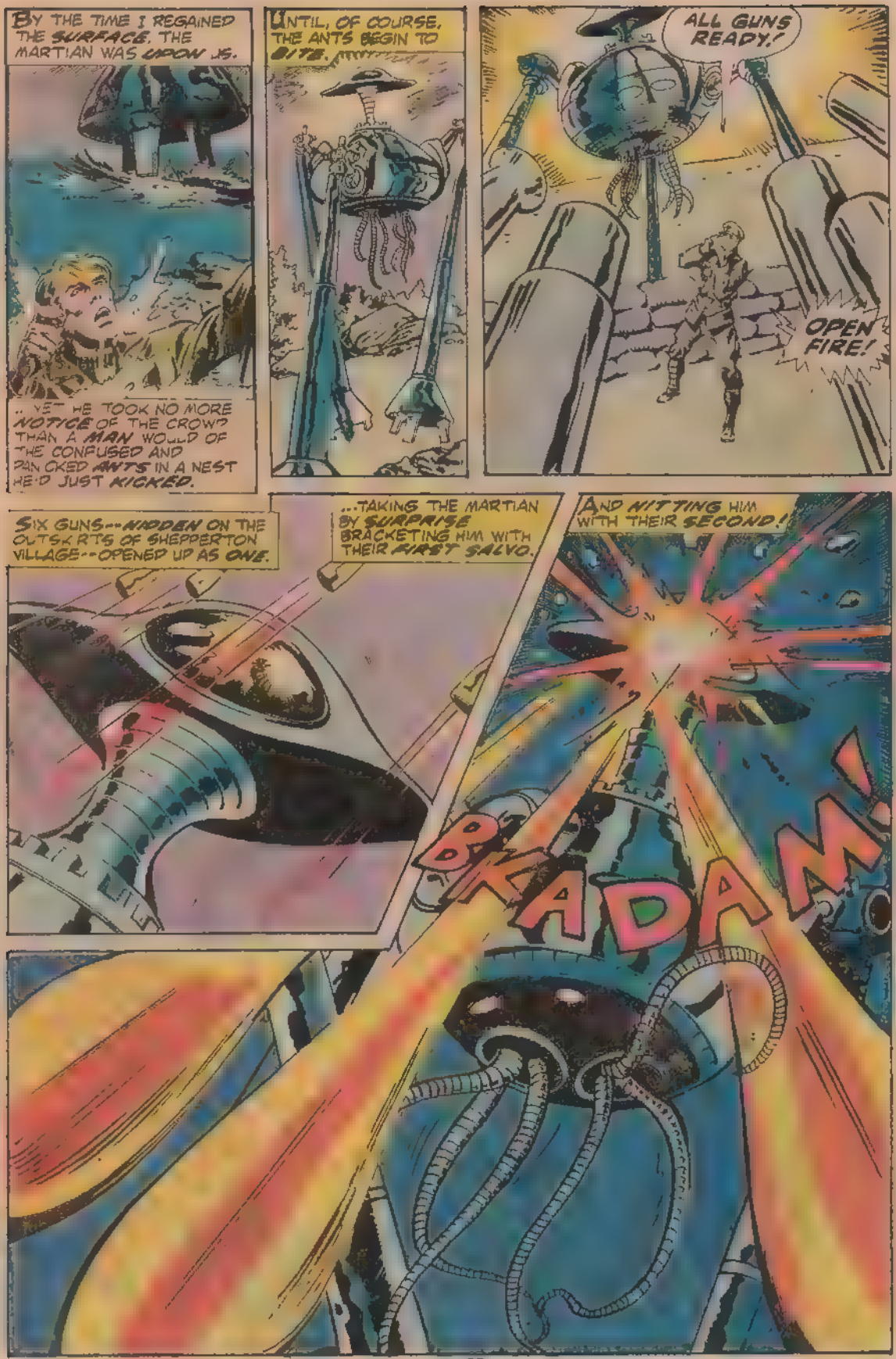

A FRIEND WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
GOD KNOWS. I SUPPOSE I'M TRYING TO HIDE.
COME INTO THE HOUSE THEN JUST GIVE ME A MOMENT TO UNBOLT THE DOOR
GOOD LORD! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU, MAN -- YOU MUST TELL ME!
WHAT 'ASN'T?
MY GOD.. THEY WIPED US OUT. SIMPLY WIPED US OUT...
HERE. TAKE SOME WHISKEY.
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU CAN USE IT.
TA. TA VERY MUCH.
HOOO. THAT'S GOOD STUFF SIR.. HITS THE SPOT. I'M GRATEFUL.
I'M... I'M A SERGEANT OF ARTILLERY SIR PART OF A BATTERY THAT WAS SUMMONED AFTER THEM MARTIANS STARTED SHOOTIN'...
AT THE DEPUTATION YOU MEAN? THEN WHAT...?
"WE ONLY GOT INTO ACTION AROUND SEVEN.. WE COULD EAR FIRIN' AS WE DROVE UP...
"WE COULD SEE THE MARTIANS FIRIN' SOME SORT A METAL SHIELD ACROSS THE COMMON TOWARDS THE SECOND CYLINDER.
"I COULDN'T SEE VERY MUCH MYSELF -- MY MEN WERE TOO BUSY UNLIMBERIN OUR GUNS
WE GOT SET IN [redacted] AN I WENT BACK O' THE LINE TO CALM ONE O' THE 'ORSE TEAMS. THERE WAS A LOT O' SMOKE IN THE AIR AN' IT WAS MAKIN' 'EM MEATHOUS...


"AN' THEN... THE SKY LIT UP LIKE IT WAS DAY.. AN' THE GUNS AN' AMMUNITION EXPLODED ALL AT ONCE...
"THERE WAS FIRE ALL AROUND LIKE THIS WAS 'ELL INSTEAD O' EARTH.
"I LAY STILL UNDER A PILE O' CHARRED DEAD MEN AN' ORSES. THE AIR SMELLED O' BURNED MEAT. BUT WHEN I COULDN'T STAND NO MORE I PULLED MYSELF FREE...
"A MINUTE BEFORE IT'D BEEN LIKE WE WERE ON PARADE.. THEN STUMBLE BANG, SWISH. WIPED OUT!
"I SAW THE CARDIGAN INFANTRY MAKE THEIR CHARGE, SUPPORTED BY A TROOP OF 'USSARS...
"THAT'S WHEN I FIRST SAW THE MACHINE, STANDIN' IN THE PIT WATCHIN' OUR LADS ADVANCE LIKE IT DON'T 'AVE A CARE IN THE WORLD.
"IT LET 'EM GET CLOSE AN' THEN IT CUT LOOSE WITH ITS EAT-RAY.
"THE CREAM O' THE REGIMENTS.. UPWARDS O' TWO HUNDRED MEN.. BURNED TO ASHES IN A FEW SECONDS.
"NOT A MAN AMONG 'EM ESCAPED ALIVE."

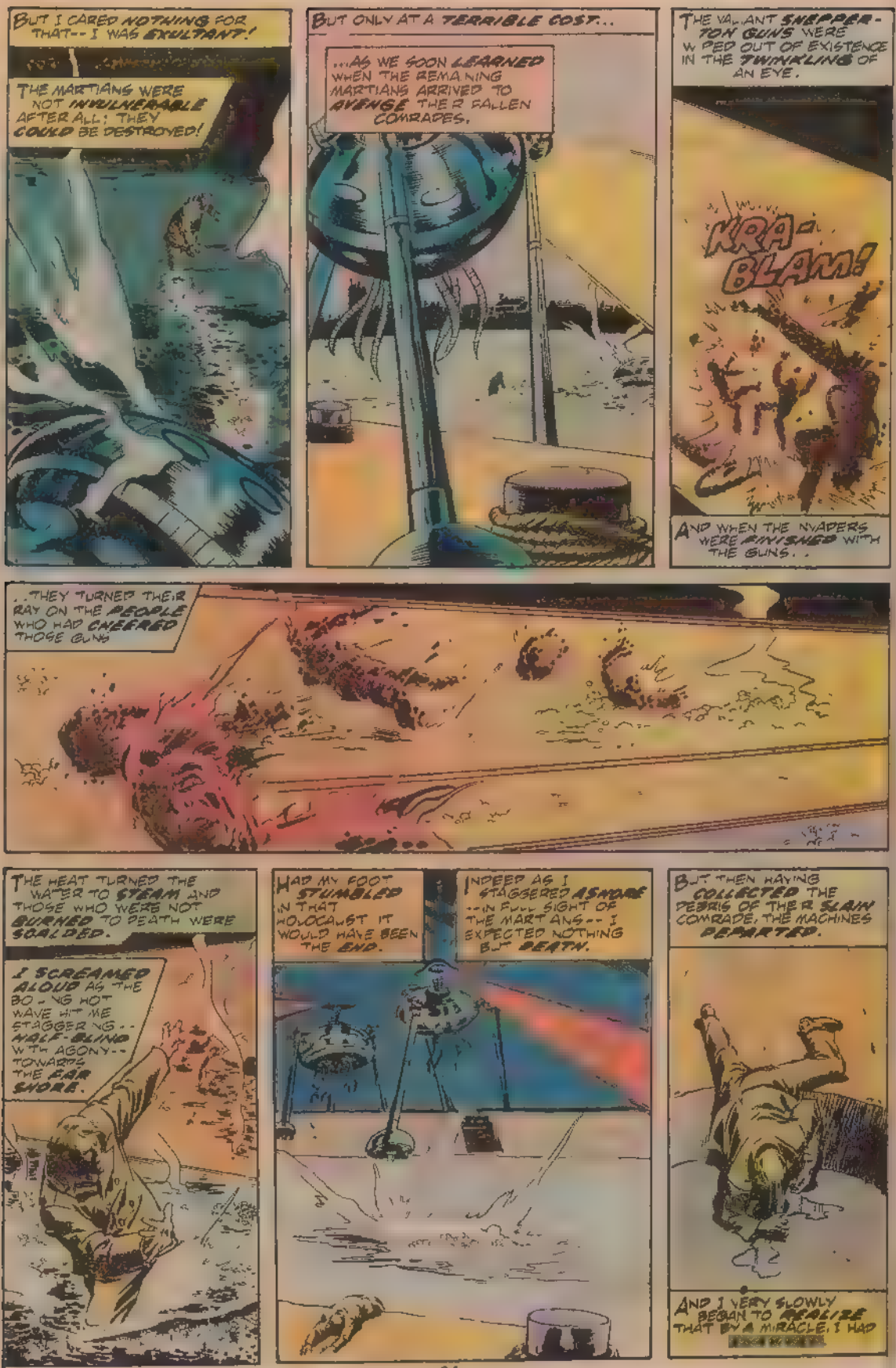
LOOK, I DUNNO 'BOUT YOU, MATE BUT I'M FOR EADIN' NORTH 'WARDS LONDON 'APE REJOININ' MY BATTERY.
CAUSE I'LL TELL YOU STRAIGHT, THIS 'OUSE IS GOIN' T BECOME NO F- PLACE TO SHELTER IN
I AGREE. BUT MY DESTINATION IS LEATHERHEAD, WHERE MY WIFE IS
ARE YOU DAFT? THE TH RD CYLINDER FELL IN THAT DIRECT.ON - THERE'LL BE FIGHTIN' MACHINES THICK AS FLIES OVER THERE BY NOW.
AN' IT'S NO KINDNESS T THE RIGHT SORT O' WIFE T BE MAK.N 'ER A WIDOW.
'S DES. IF SHE 'AS ANY SENSE, SHE'D 'AVE CLEARED OUT O LEATHERHEAD LONG AGO.
I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT.
YOU KNOW I AM SO LET'S GATHER UP ALL THE FOOD WE CAN -- WH SKEY FOR THE FLASK, PLUS BISCUITS AN' SLICED MEATS --
--AN THEN WE'LL BE OFF.
WE STAYED CLEAR OF THE MAIN ROADS, MOVING CAUT OUSLY -- EVER ALERT -- THROUGH THE STRANGELY HUSHED WOODS.
ALL MORNING, WE HAD SEEN EVIDENCE OF THE MARTIAN PRESENCE -- SHATTERED BUILDINGS SCORCHED LAND AN OCCAS ONAL CORPSE...
BUT T WASN T UNTIL MID-DAY THAT WE FOUND ANY LIVE HUMANS RATHER THEY FOUND US.
HALT -- OR I FIRE!
NEVER MIND, BENSON -- THESE MEN HARDLY LOOK LIKE THE MONSTERS WE'VE HEARD TELL OF.
YOU'RE THE FIRST MEN I'VE SEEN COMING THIS WAY SINCE SUNRISE -- WHAT'S BREWING?
GUN DESTROYED LAST NIGHT SIR. 'AVE BEEN 'IDING, TRYIN' T REJOIN BATTERY, SIR. YOU'LL COME IN SIGHT O' THE MARTIANS I EXPECT, 'BOUT 'ALF-A-MILE DOWN THIS ROAD.


I SEE, STAND AT EASE, SERGEANT TELL ME, THOUGH-- IF YOU CAN--WHAT ARE THEY LIKE?
GIANTS IN ARMOR SIR 'UNDRED'S OF FEE- IGH THREE LEGS AN A BODY LIKE 'LUMINIUM WITH A GREAT MIGHTY 'EAD ON AN 'OOD.
AN THE EAD SHOOTS FIRE SIR--AN' STRIKES YOU DEAD.
GET OUT WHAT CONFOUNDED NONSENSE!
HE'S TELLING THE TRUTH, SERGEANT.
YOU'VE SEEN IT?
I HAVE
THEN I SUPPOSE IT'S MY BUSINESS TO SEE IT TOO
SERGEANT YOU GO ON THIS ROAD TO WEYBRIDGE AND REPORT YOUR STORY TO BRIGADIER MARVIN.
I WISHED THE SOLDIERS GOOD LUCK AS THEY RODE OFF. WE NEVER SAW THEM AGAIN.
THE SERGEANT AND I PUSHED ON TO WEYBRIDGE, BUT-- WHEN WE'D ARRIVED--NO ONE COULD TELL US WHERE THE HEADQUARTERS WAS. I'D NEVER BEFORE SEEN SUCH MONUMENTAL CONFUSION.
WITH ALL THESE MEN AND THIS EQUIPMENT WE OUGHT TO GET ONE FAIR SHOT AT ANY RATE.
WEYBRIDGE
YOU THINK SO?
I'M THINKIN' 'TIS BOWS AN' ARROWS AGAINST LIGHTN'N' BOLTS NOTHIN' MORE. REMEMBER, THIS LOT HAVEN'T SEEN THE FIRE BEAM YET.
EVENTUALLY WE ARRIVED AT THE THAMES BY SHEPPERTON LOCK--NEAR WHERE IT JOINS THE WEY...
THERE'S NO PUSHIN' AHEAD ON THIS CROWD, MATE: IF WE WANT T' CROSS BY BOAT, IT LOOKS LIKE WE'LL JUST 'AVE TO WAIT OUR
AN 'ARRY THEM MARTIANS AIN'T IN 'URRY.
BUT AS IT TURNED OUT THEY WERE
WHAT'S THAT SOUND? QUIET ALL OF YOU... I CAN NEAR SOMETHING.
TWELVE POUNDER BY THE NOISE OF IT--AN' THERE'S ANOTHER ONE.
THE FIGHT'S BEGUN

THERE THEY [illegible]!
YONDER--D YOU SEE THEM ?! YONDER !!
QUICKLY--ONE AFTER THE OTHER--ONE TWO THREE FOUR OF THE MART ANS APPEARED FAR AWAY ACROSS THE FLAT MEADOWS THAT STRETCHED TOWARDS CHERTSEY AND STRODE MARVELOUSLY TOWARDS THE RIVER.
AN THERE'S A FIFTH.
E'S CLOSER THAN THE REST AN' EADIN' THIS WAY FAST.
TIME WE WERE MOVIN'. IN ANOTHER MINUTE. THIS'LL BE EVERY MAN FOR 'IMSELF.'
ZZZRRRRAAHK!
B-THOOOM!
THAT'S 'ORN IT!
SAVE YOURSELF MAN--THERE'S NO OLDIN' THIS MOB NOW!'
AND THEN HE WAS GONE. TORN FROM ME BY THE CROWD AS THEY TURNED--ALMOST AS A SINGLE ENTITY--AND STARTED FOR THE RIVER.
BUT THE PEOPLE..?
T'HELL WITH 'EM!
I COULD NO MORE RESIST IT THAN COULD A WOOD CHIP RESIST A MILL RACE.
ALL THE WHILE, MY THOUGHTS WERE OF THE FIGHTING MACHINE AND IT'S TERRIBLE HEAT RAY.
OF COURSE--THE HEAT-RAY, THE WATER--THAT'S IT!
EVERYONE GET UNDER WATER--IT WILL PROTECT YOU FROM THE HEAT-RAY!
GET UNDER WAT--
GLARRRPH!
OUT OF MY WAY, MANY YOUR EYES!


BY THE TIME I REGAINED THE SURFACE, THE MARTIAN WAS UPON US.
..YET HE TOOK NO MORE NOTICE OF THE CROWD THAN A MAN WOULD OF THE CONFUSED AND PANICKED ANTS IN A NEST HE'D JUST KICKED.
UNTIL, OF COURSE, THE ANTS BEGIN TO BITE.
ALL GUNS READY!
OPEN FIRE!
SIX GUNS--HIDDEN ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF SHEPPERTON VILLAGE--OPENED UP AS ONE.
...TAKING THE MARTIAN BY SURPRISE BRACKETING HIM WITH THEIR FIRST SALVO.
AND HITTING HIM WITH THEIR SECOND!
BKADAM!

OH GOOD SHOOTING LADS-- WELL DONE!
NOW, WHILE HE'S HELPLESS-- HIM AGAIN!
KILL HIM!
AS IF IN ANSWER TO MY CRY FOR BLOOD THE BATTERY FIRED A THIRD TIME
... TS SHELLS STRIKING THE MARTIAN ANEW.
THAKOW!
UNTIL, LIKE A PUNCH-DRUNK FIGHTER WHO HAS FINALLY HAD ENOUGH...
... THE MACHINE-- ITS ALIEN CREW DEAD OR DYING-- FELL..
AND DEFTSELF
FA-SHAMM!
AS THE CAMERA OF THE HEAT-RAY HIT THE WATER, IT FLASHED INTO STEAM -- SENDING A HUGE WAVE MUCH LIKE A TIDAL BORE) SWEEPING DOWNRIVER TOWARDS THE CROWD AND ME...

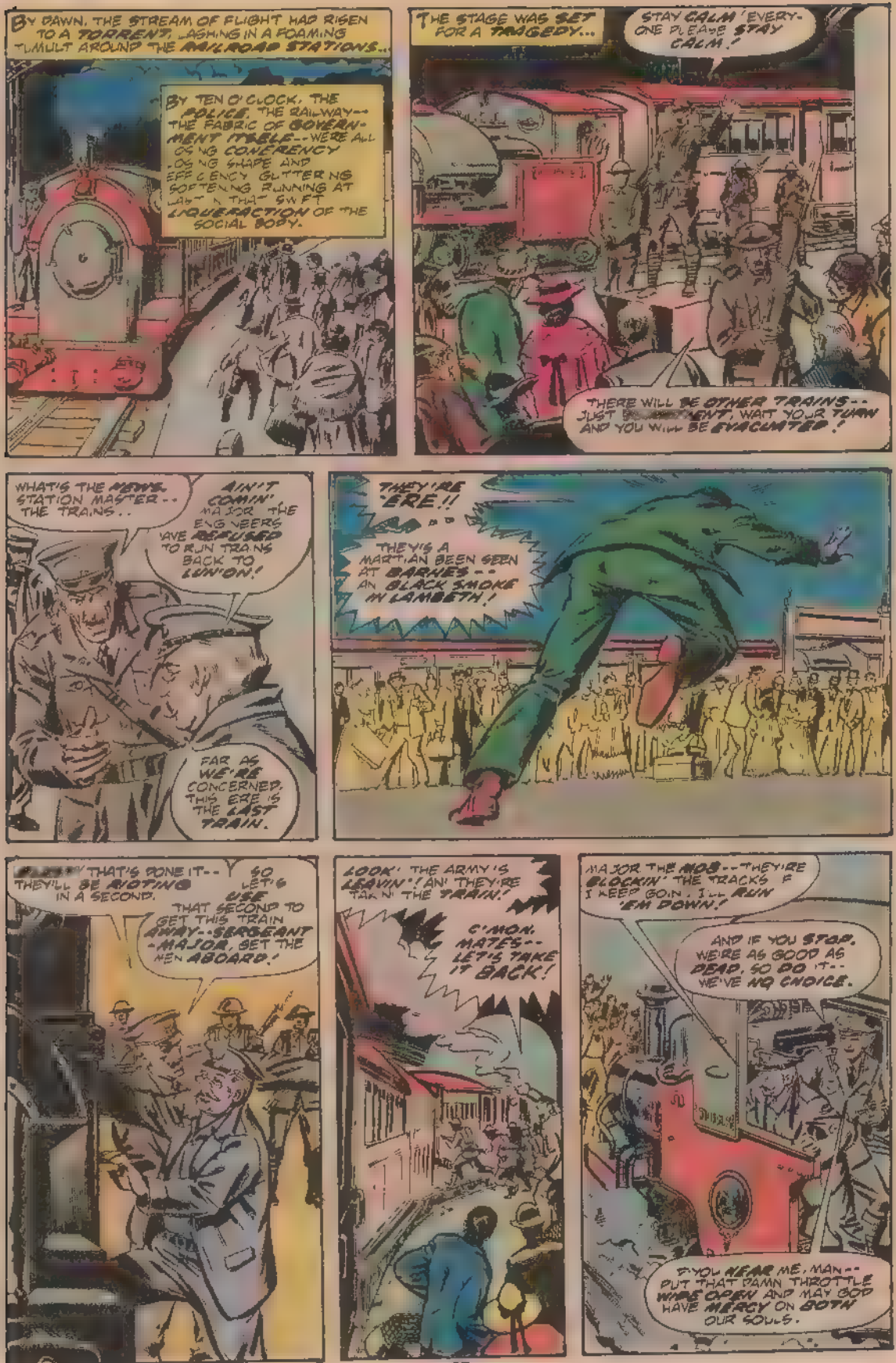

BUT I CARED NOTHING FOR THAT-- I WAS EXULTANT!
THE MARTIANS WERE NOT INVULNERABLE AFTER ALL; THEY COULD BE DESTROYED!
BUT ONLY AT A TERRIBLE COST...
...AS WE SOON LEARNED WHEN THE REMAINING MARTIANS ARRIVED TO AVENGE THEIR FALLEN COMRADES.
THE VALIANT SHRAPNEL-TON GUNS WERE WIPED OUT OF EXISTENCE IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE.
KRA-A-A-BLAM!
AND WHEN THE INVADERS WERE FINISHED WITH THE GUNS..
..THEY TURNED THEIR RAY ON THE PEOPLE WHO HAD CHEERED THOSE GUNS
THE HEAT TURNED THE WATER TO STEAM AND THOSE WHO WERE NOT BURNED TO DEATH WERE SCALDED.
I SCREAMED ALOUD AS THE BOILING HOT WAVE HIT ME STAGGERING-- HALF-BLIND WITH AGONY-- TOWARDS THE FAR SHORE.
HAD MY FOOT STUMBLED IN THAT HOLOCAUST IT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE END.
INDEED AS I STAGGERED ASHORE --IN FULL SIGHT OF THE MARTIANS-- I EXPECTED NOTHING BUT DEATH.
BUT THEN HAVING COLLECTED THE DEBRIS OF THEIR SLAIN COMRADES, THE MACHINES DEPARTED.
AND I VERY SLOWLY BEGAN TO REALIZE THAT BY A MIRACLE, I HAD

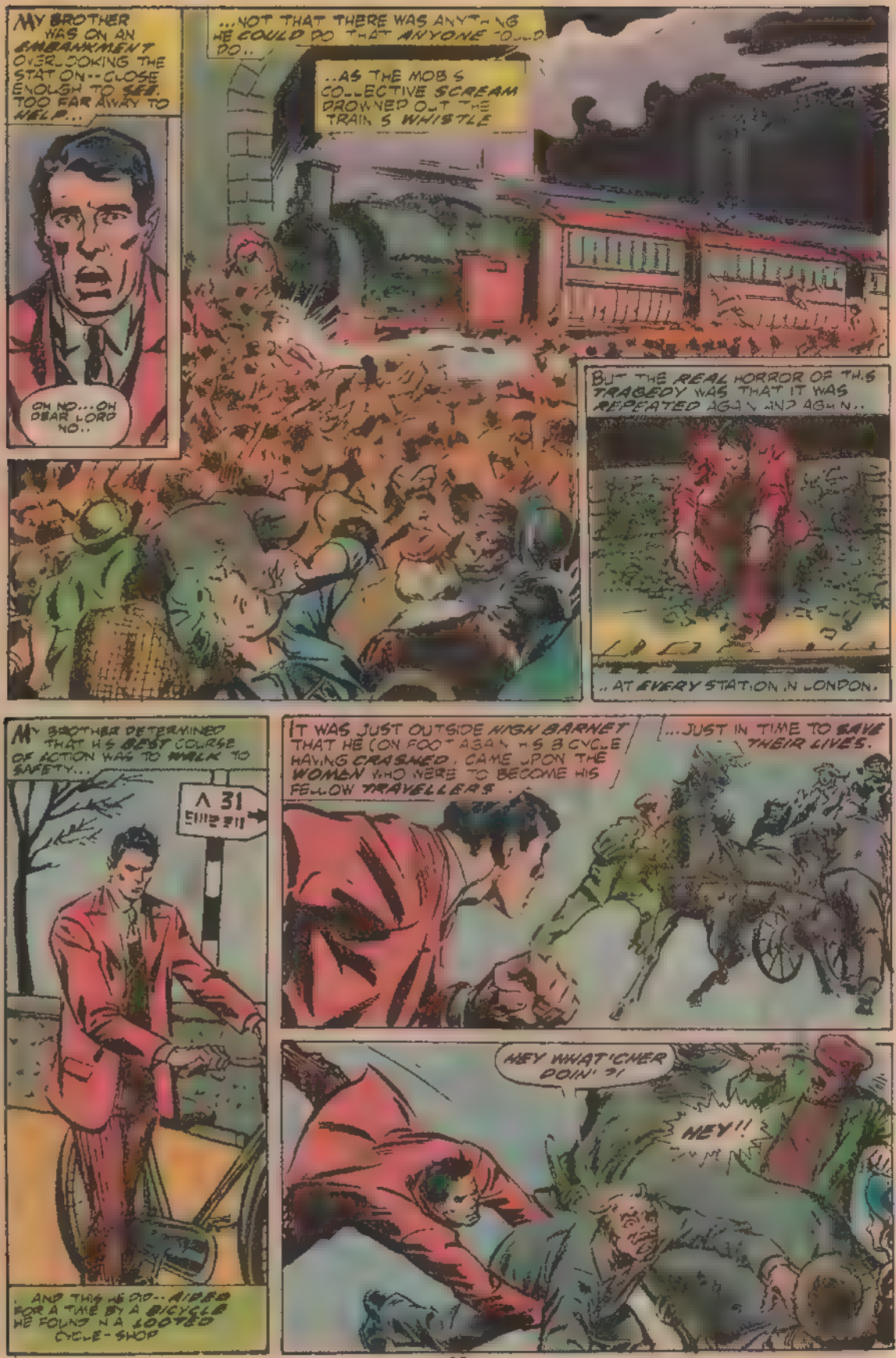
PART III

THE ROUT OF CIVILIZATION

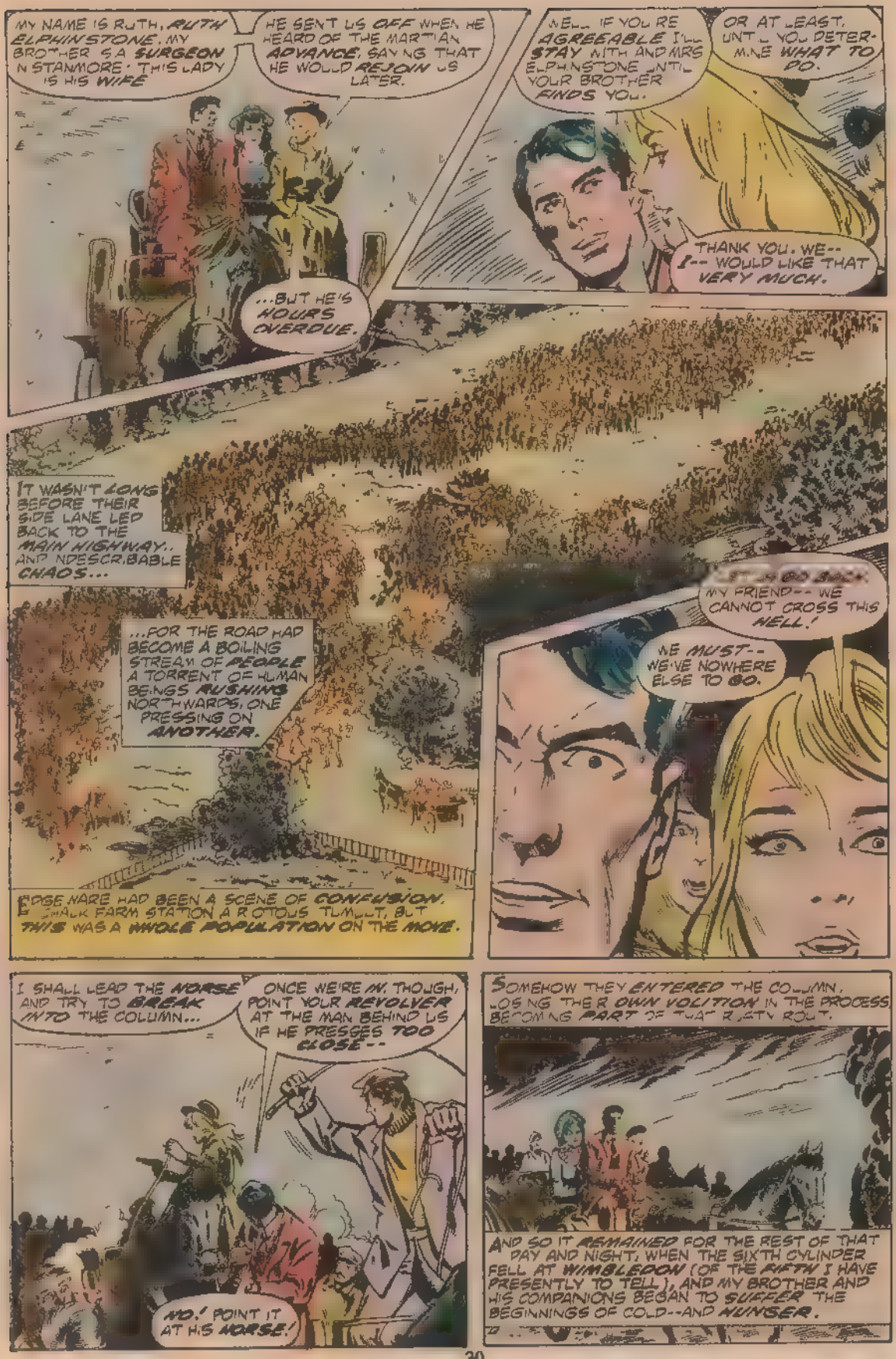
IT WAS NOT UNTIL MONDAY MORNING THAT LONDON AS A WHOLE FELT THE FULL BRUNT OF THE CATASTROPHE WHICH HAD BEFALLEN THE ARMY AND INDEED THE WORLD...
MY YOUNGER BROTHER- AFTER A STRENUOUS NIGHT'S WORK (LIKE MANY OF HIS FELLOW CITIZENS) ASLEEP WHEN THE NEWS CAME)
THE LAST DECENT NIGHT'S SLEEP HE HAD KNOWN FOR MANY DAYS
GET UP! D'YOU HEAR THERE-- ROUSE YOURSELVES AND GET OUT OF LONDON!
THE MARTIANS ARE COMING!
THE MARTIANS ARE COMING!

WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME--?!
CAN'T A BODY GET SOME SLEEP ANYMORE?
DON'T WASTE TIME WITH QUESTIONS MAN--GET OUT OF HERE NOW! THE MARTIANS ARE COMING
B-BUT--?
HERE--READ THIS! AND THEN GO FIND SOMEWHERE TO HIDE! FOR IF YOU WAIT TILL MORNING, IT'LL BE TOO LATE!
FROM THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
The Martians are able to discharge enormous quantities of black and poisonous vapour by means of rockets. They have smothered our batteries, destroyed Richmond, Kingston and Wimbledon, and are advancing steadily towards London, destroying everything on the way. It is impossible to stop them. There is no safety from the Black Smoke but in instant flight.
THAT WAS ALL. BUT IT WAS ENOUGH.
OUTER DEFENCES FORCED! FEARFUL MASSACRES IN THE THAMES VALLEY!
LONDON IN DANGER OF SUFFOCATION!
THE CITY IS GOING MAD! EVERYONE ACTING LIKE THIS IS THE END OF THE WORLD.
BUT FOR ALL I KNOW, PERHAPS IT IS.
THE PROBLEM IS ONLY TEN POUNDS CASH AND I'VE DON'T THINK THE BANKS WILL BE OPEN TODAY
SO I'VE GOT TO DO.
NOW WHAT'S THE BEST WAY OUT OF LONDON?

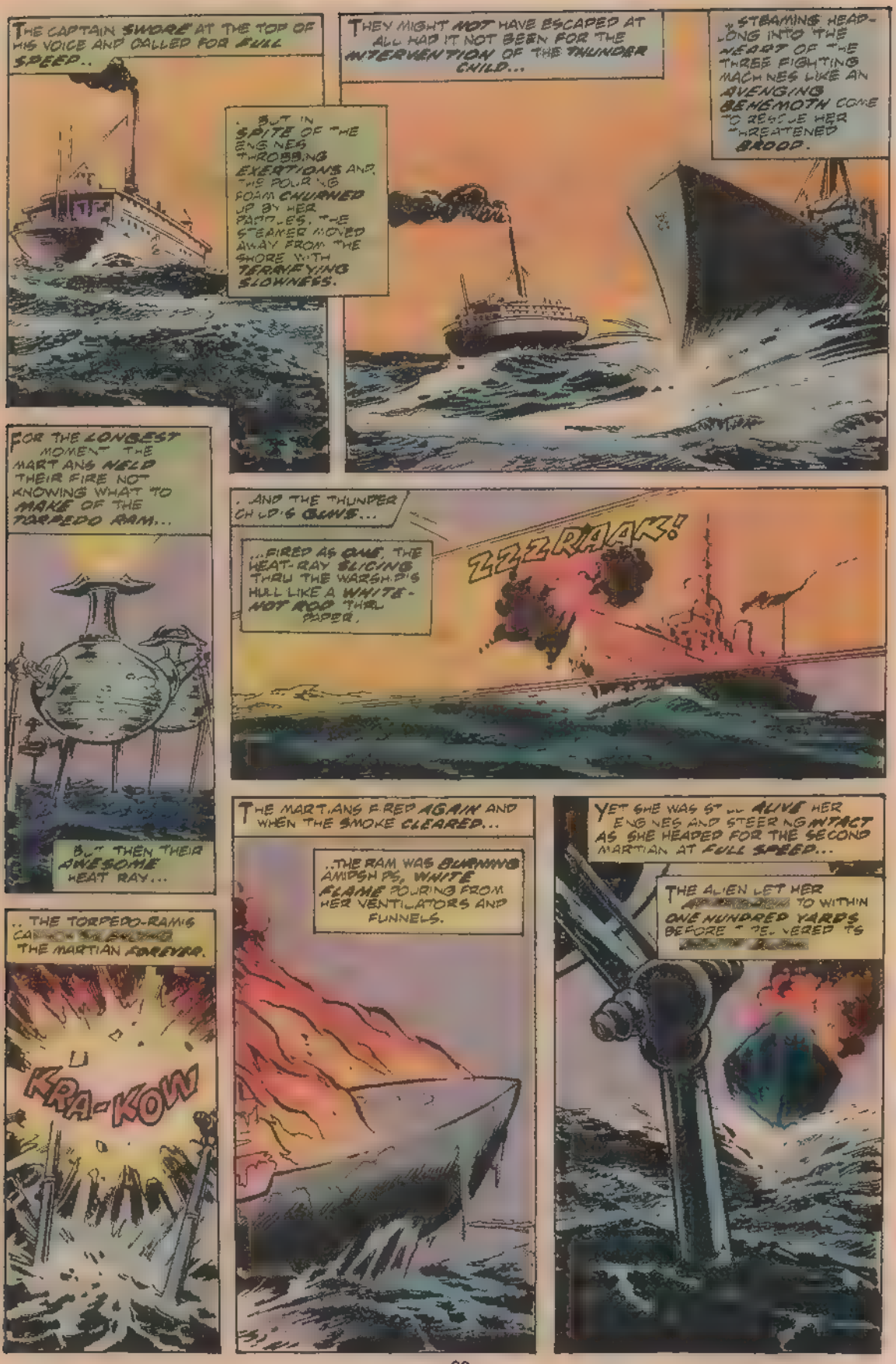

By dawn, the stream of flight had risen to a torrent, lashing in a foaming tumult around the railroad stations..
By ten o' clock, the police, the railway-- the fabric of government itself-- were all losing coherency, losing shape and efficiency, guttering, softening, running at last in that swift liquefaction of the social body.
The stage was set for a tragedy...
Stay calm! Everyone please stay calm!
There will be other trains-- just be patient, wait your turn and you will be evacuated!
What's the news, station master-- the trains..
Ain't comin' major the engineers 'ave refused to run trains back to Lun'on!
Far as we're concerned, this 'ere is the last train.
They're 'ere!!
They's a martian been seen at Barnes-- an black smoke in Lambeth!
That's done it-- they'll be rioting in a second. So let's use that second to get this train away--Sergeant-Major, get the men aboard!
Look! The army's leavin'! An' they're takin' the train!
C'mon, mates-- let's take it back!
Major the mob--they're blockin' the tracks! I keep goin, I'll run 'em down!
And if you stop, we're as good as dead, so do it-- we've no choice.
If you fear me, man-- put that damn throttle wide open and may God have mercy on both our souls.


MY BROTHER WAS ON AN EMBANKMENT OVERLOOKING THE STATION--CLOSE ENOUGH TO SEE, TOO FAR AWAY TO HELP..
OH NO...OH DEAR LORD NO..
...NOT THAT THERE WAS ANYTHING HE COULD DO THAT ANYONE COULD DO..
..AS THE MOB'S COLLECTIVE SCREAM DROWNED OUT THE TRAIN'S WHISTLE
BUT THE REAL HORROR OF THIS TRAGEDY WAS THAT IT WAS REPEATED AGAIN AND AGAIN..
..AT EVERY STATION IN LONDON.
MY BROTHER DETERMINED THAT HIS BEST COURSE OF ACTION WAS TO WALK TO SAFETY..
A 31
..AND THIS HE DID--AIDED FOR A TIME BY A BICYCLE HE FOUND IN A LOOTED CYCLE-SHOP
IT WAS JUST OUTSIDE HIGH BARNET THAT HE (ON FOOT AGAIN--HIS BICYCLE HAVING CRASHED) CAME UPON THE WOMAN WHO WERE TO BECOME HIS FELLOW TRAVELLERS
...JUST IN TIME TO SAVE THEIR LIVES.
HEY WHAT'CHER DOIN' ?!
HEY!!

WE WEREN'T GOIN' TER HURT ANYONE MISTER
WE WAS EVEN CONSIDERIN' TAKIN' THE LADIES ALONG WI' US IF THEY T-REATED US RIGHT.
BUT YOU, MATE--YOU I DON'T MIND KILLIN'--
WHOOOFF!
SHUK!
YOU'LL FIND ME A HARDER NUT TO CRACK THAN THESE LADIES, VILLAIN!
NOT MUCH ARPER PA..
BRAK!
LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE MATE--
--BETTER A MAN SHOULD KILL YOU THAN SOME MARTIAN, EH?
BDAM!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? HERE, TAKE MY PISTOL: THERE'S STILL TWO MEN LEFT..
THEN LET'S NOT PUSH OUR LUCK. I SUGGEST WE... RETURN TO YOUR CHAISE.
YOU SAVED MY LIFE, MA'AM; I'M IN YOUR DEBT.
I'LL SIT HERE, IF I MAY.
THOSE WOULD-BE HIGHWAYMEN HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF US, I THINK--THEY'VE NO INTEREST IN PREY WITH TEETH.
NEXT TIME THOUGH WE MIGHT NOT BE SO FORTUNATE.


MY NAME IS RUTH, RUTH ELPHINSTONE. MY BROTHER IS A SURGEON IN STANMORE. THIS LADY IS HIS WIFE
HE SENT US OFF WHEN HE HEARD OF THE MARTIAN ADVANCE, SAYING THAT HE WOULD REJOIN US LATER.
...BUT HE'S HOURS OVERDUE.
WELL IF YOU'RE AGREEABLE I'LL STAY WITH AND MRS ELPHINSTONE UNTIL YOUR BROTHER FINDS YOU.
OR AT LEAST, UNTIL YOU DETERMINE WHAT TO DO.
THANK YOU. WE-- I-- WOULD LIKE THAT VERY MUCH.
IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE THEIR SIDE LANE LED BACK TO THE MAIN HIGHWAY.. AND INDESCRIBABLE CHAOS...
...FOR THE ROAD HAD BECOME A BOILING STREAM OF PEOPLE A TORRENT OF HUMAN BEINGS RUSHING NORTHWARDS, ONE PRESSING ON ANOTHER.
EDGEWARE HAD BEEN A SCENE OF CONFUSION, A SMALL FARM STATION A TUMULTUOUS TUMULT, BUT THIS WAS A WHOLE POPULATION ON THE MOVE.
WE MUST-- WE'VE NOWHERE ELSE TO GO.
MY FRIEND-- WE CANNOT CROSS THIS HELL!
I SHALL LEAD THE HORSE AND TRY TO BREAK INTO THE COLUMN...
ONCE WE'RE IN, THOUGH, POINT YOUR REVOLVER AT THE MAN BEHIND US IF HE PRESSES TOO CLOSE--
NO.' POINT IT AT HIS HORSE!
SOMEHOW THEY ENTERED THE COLUMN, LOSING THEIR OWN VOLITION IN THE PROCESS, BECOMING PART OF THAT FRANTIC ROUT.
AND SO IT REMAINED FOR THE REST OF THAT DAY AND NIGHT, WHEN THE SIXTH CYLINDER FELL AT WIMBLEDON (OF THE FIFTH I HAVE PRESENTLY TO TELL), AND MY BROTHER AND HIS COMPANIONS BEGAN TO SUFFER THE BEGINNINGS OF COLD--AND HUNGER.

By WEDNESDAY THE THREE OF THEM -- ON FOOT NOW THEIR HORSE HAVING BEEN CONFISCATED FOR FOOD THE PREVIOUS DAY -- FINALLY REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE SEA
THE SEVENTH CYLINDER HAD FALLEN THE PREVIOUS NIGHT AND RUMORS ABOUNDED OF MARTIAN MACHINES RUSHING TOWARDS THE COAST
THE ARMY HAD MATTERS WELL IN HAND THOUGH--
HAVING PRESSED ALL MANNER OF CRAFT INTO SERVICE TO EVACUATE ENGLAND'S SUDDENLY REFUGEE POPULACE
IT WAS JUST PAST MID-DAY THAT MY BROTHER AND THE BOWLSTONES WERE TAKEN ABOARD A PADDLE STEAMER FROM THE THAMES...
YOU BOUND FOR ESTUARY.
OH, THIS COCOA IS A MARVEL AFTER THREE DAYS OF NOTHING...
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT HARRY?
THUNDER CHILD
THAT IRONCLAD. IT'S THE THUNDER CHILD. PART OF THE INSHORE SQUADRON.
IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY AT THE HORIZON YOU CAN SEE THE SMOKE OF THE BULK OF THE CHANNEL FLEET.
IF YOU'LL PARDON MY BEING SO FORWARD...
I'D RATHER LOOK AT YOU.
I'M GLAD I WAS HERE
LOOK ASHORE EVERYONE -- A MARTIAN'S COMING!!
IT'S SO TINY SO FAR AWAY -- & WELL WE'RE SAFE.
WE SHOULD BE
BUT AFTER ALL I'VE SEEN AND HEARD, I'M NOT SO SURE.


THE CAPTAIN SHOUTED AT THE TOP OF HIS VOICE AND CALLED FOR FULL SPEED..
..BUT IN SPITE OF THE ENGINES THROBBING EXERTIONS AND THE POURING FOAM CHURNED UP BY HER PADDLES, THE STEAMER MOVED AWAY FROM THE SHORE WITH TERRIFYING SLOWNESS.
THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE ESCAPED AT ALL HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE INTERVENTION OF THE THUNDER CHILD...
..STEAMING HEADLONG INTO THE HEART OF THE THREE FIGHTING MACHINES LIKE AN AVENGING BEHEMOTH COME TO RESCUE HER THREATENED BROOD.
FOR THE LONGEST MOMENT THE MARTIANS HELD THEIR FIRE NOT KNOWING WHAT TO MAKE OF THE TORPEDO RAM...
BUT THEN THEIR AWESOME HEAT RAY...
..AND THE THUNDER CHILD'S GUNS...
...FIRED AS ONE, THE HEAT-RAY SLICING THRU THE WARSHIP'S HULL LIKE A WHITE-HOT KNIFE THRU PAPER.
ZZZZRAAK!
THE MARTIANS FIRED AGAIN AND WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARED...
..THE RAM WAS BURNING AMIDSHIPS, WHITE FLAME POURING FROM HER VENTILATORS AND FUNNELS.
YET SHE WAS STILL ALIVE HER ENGINES AND STEERING INTACT AS SHE HEADED FOR THE SECOND MARTIAN AT FULL SPEED...
THE ALIEN LET HER [illegible] TO WITHIN ONE HUNDRED YARDS BEFORE [illegible]
..THE TORPEDO-RAM'S CA[illegible] THE MARTIAN FOREVER.
KRA-KOW

BUT THE MARTIAN HAD FIRED TOO LATE.
...FOR EVEN AS THE THUNDER CHILD DIED, THE MOMENTUM OF ITS FINAL CHARGE CARRIED THE FLAMING WRECKAGE FORWARD INTO THE FIGHTING MACHINE, CRUMPLING IT LIKE IT WAS NO MORE THAN A THING OF CARDBOARD...
...THE FINAL EXPLOSION OF THE RAM'S POWDER MAGAZINE DESTROYING THEM BOTH!
BUH-WHROOOM!
LEAVING THE FLEET OF REFUGEES TO BEAT ITS WAY SEAWARD WHILE THE NAVY MOVED IN TO GIVE THE MARTIANS BATTLE...
.. AND THEN, IT WAS DARK AND MY BROTHER THE ELPHINSTONE LADIES-- ALL THOSE ABOARD THE TINY PADDLE-STEAMER -- WERE SAFE FOR THE MOMENT.

PART IV

EARTH UNDER THE MARTIANS

That day my brother's story ended. Mine was not half so well...

After we washed ashore at Shepperton--bloated by boiling, half-dead from gas--and exhaust on the wet sand, we curate and we travelled on together

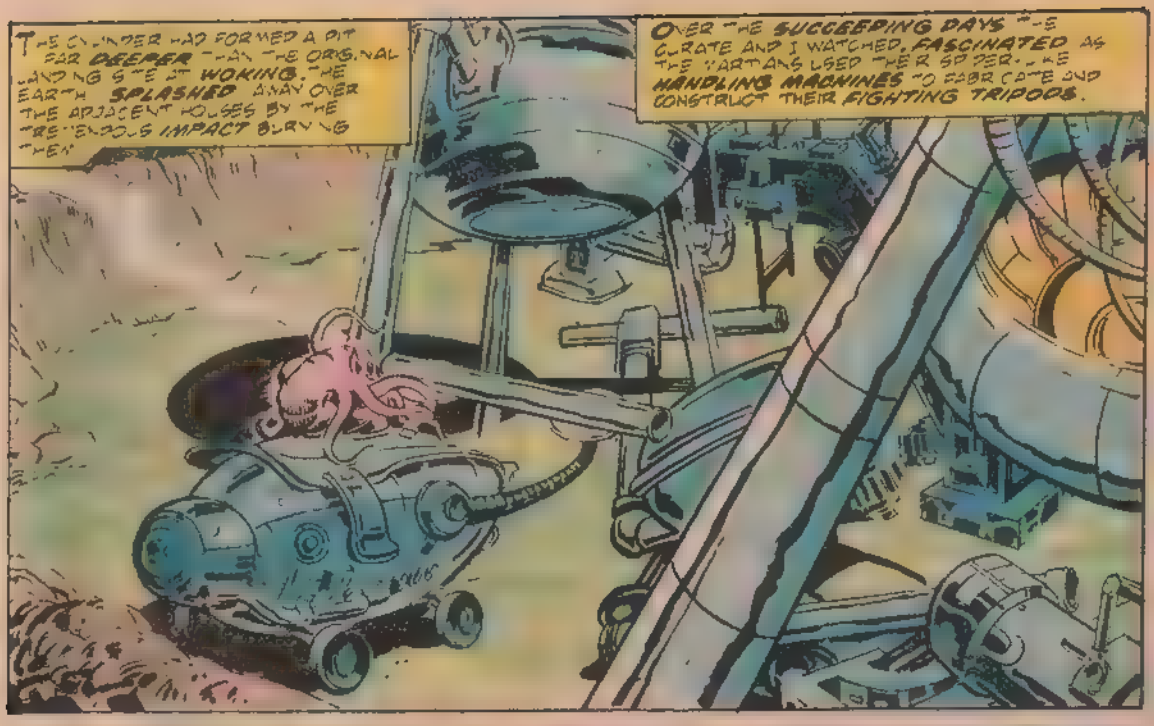
So, while my brother made his way out of London, I endured to go the other side--towards Leatherhead and drove your wife

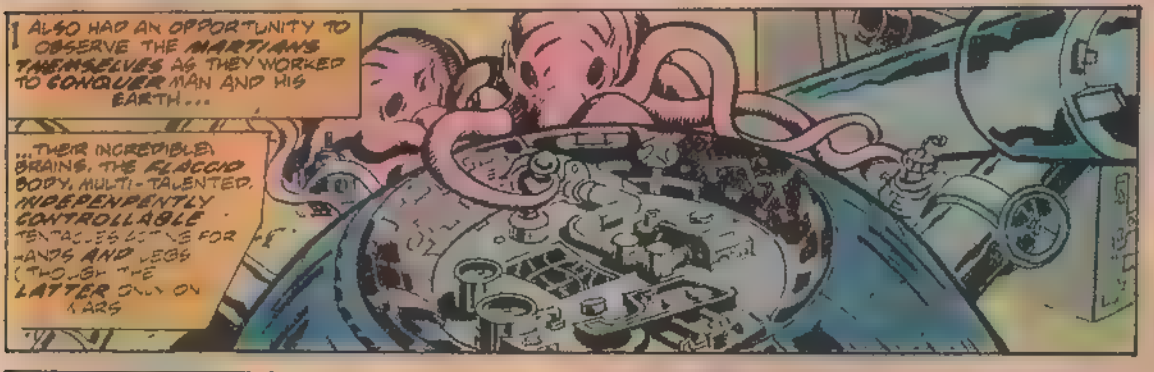
The Martians--flushed with their triumph over the army, gathered--the five--the Thames Valley--were very active in their attempts on Esher, capturing--and exterminating me.

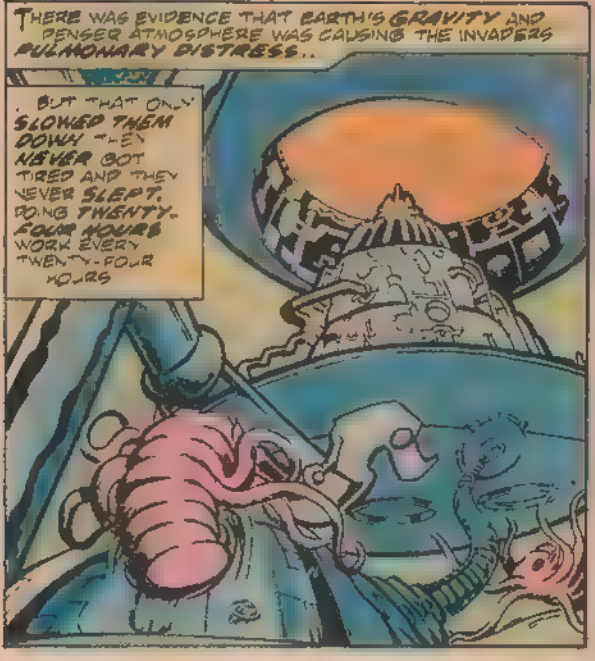
Which made overland travel rather difficult.

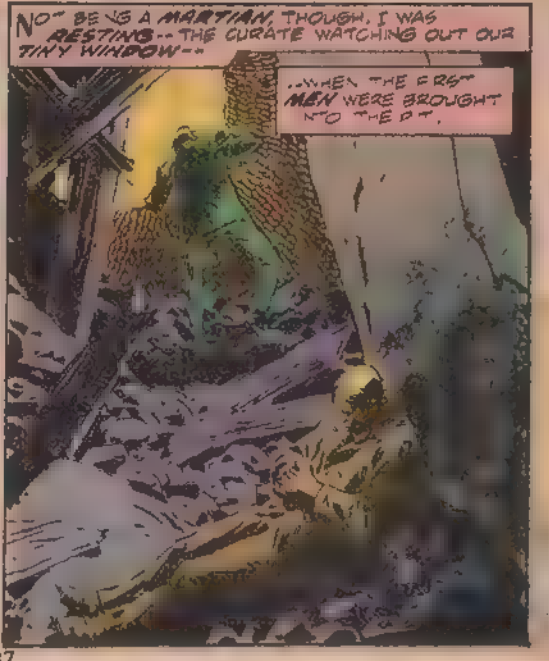
We had been wandering through desolation for two days and a night, watching fighting machines at work harvesting people--
--for that is indeed what it looked like. Some farmer picking and choosing from among his prize stock.
Neither the crate nor I had eaten during our time on the road, though I had become proficient at the mechanics of scavenging--albeit unsuccessful.
But this evening, in a white house within a walled garden just outside Sheen luck was with us.
Or so I thought at first
Well bless my soul.
Don't blaspheme my--what have you found?
A larder! A feast! Two loaves of bread, an uncooked steak half a ham some beans a lettuce--and beer! Bottled beer!
There was firewood a dozen bottles of burgundy tinned soup, tinned salmon, tinned biscuits--this was a treasure trove to rival Aladdin's!
Despite our good fortune we still ate in darkness, not daring to strike a light for fear it would attract Martians.
But they came anyway, though not in the way I'd thought.
That's strange; it's getting light outside.
But now? It's not even midnight...
BSHAAM!
AARRGH!

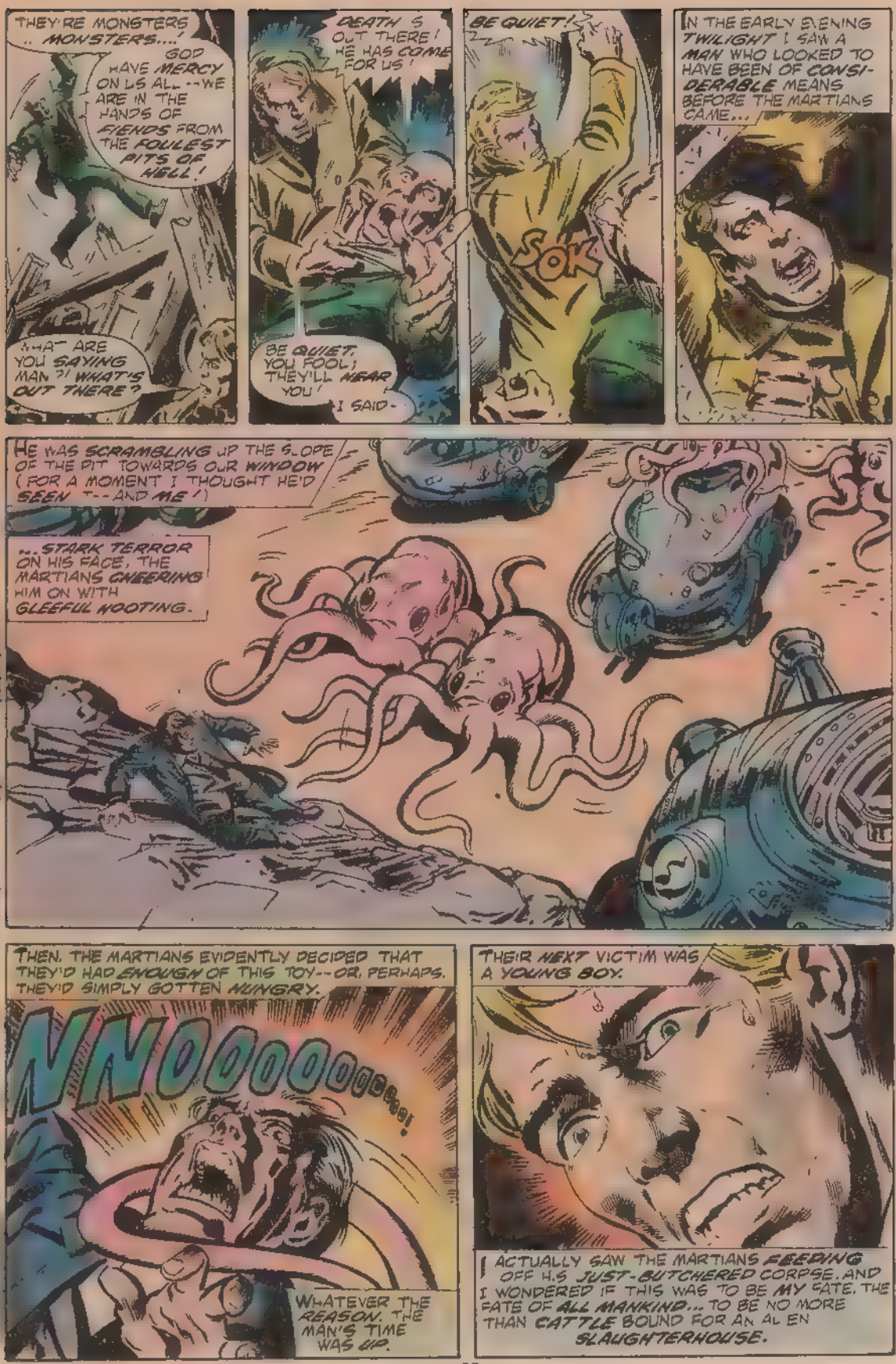
DO YOU SEE BETTER?
I SAID DO YOU FEEL BETTER?
I'M ALIVE, AREN'T I? I'LL SETTLE FOR THAT-- OW! MY HEAD!
BUT WHY ARE YOU WHISPERING? AND WHAT HIT US?
DON'T MOVE I BEG OF YOU. YOU'VE BEEN UNCONSCIOUS NEAR TWO DAYS...AND BESIDES THE FLOOR IS COVERED WITH SMASHED CROCKERY.
YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY MOVE WITHOUT MAKING A NOISE AND. AND
I FANCY THEY ARE OUTSIDE.
THE MARTIANS?
BUT THAT EXPLOSION WAS NOTHING LIKE THE HEAT RAY.
I'M GOING TO TAKE A LOOK
NO! YOU MUSN'T-THE NOISE!
'S BROAD DAYLIGHT YOU FOOL- I CAN SEE ENOUGH TO BREAK ANYTHING THERE'S REALLY NO NEED TO WORRY
OF COURSE--I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THE NIGHT EXPLOSION WAS CLUE ENOUGH.
THE FIFTH CYLINDER FROM MARS HAS STRUCK THIS HOUSE AND BURIED US UNDER THE RUINS.
GOD HAVE MERCY UPON US
PRESENTLY I HEARD THE CURATE WHIMPERING TO HIMSELF

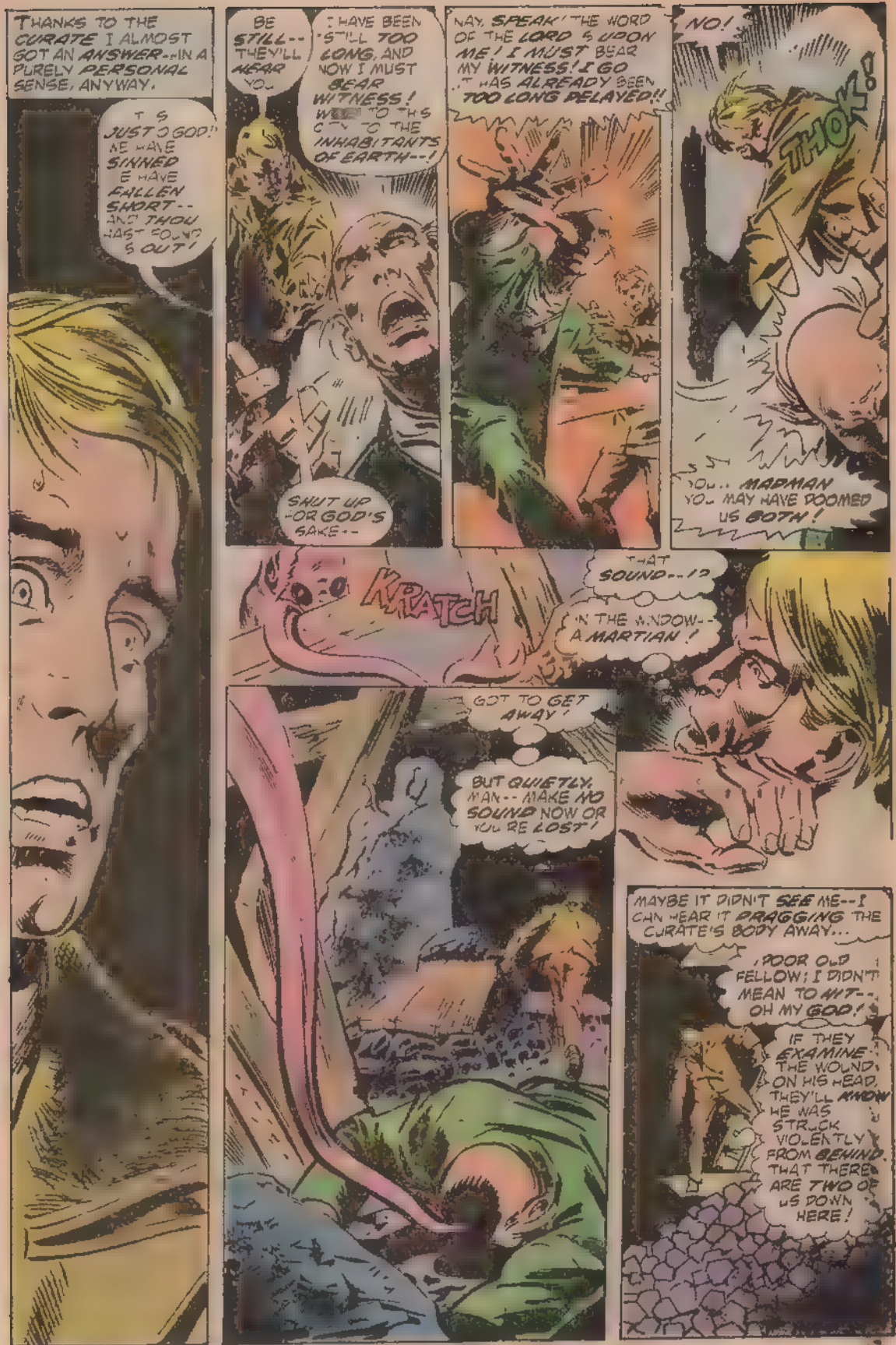

THE CYLINDER HAD FORMED A PIT FAR DEEPER THAN THE ORIGINAL LANDING SITE BY WOKING. THE EARTH SPLASHED AWAY OVER THE ADJACENT HOUSES BY THE TREMENDOUS IMPACT BURYING THEM.
OVER THE SUCCEEDING DAYS THE CURATE AND I WATCHED, FASCINATED AS THE MARTIANS USED THEIR SPIDER-LIKE HANDLING MACHINES TO FABRICATE AND CONSTRUCT THEIR FIGHTING TRIPODS.

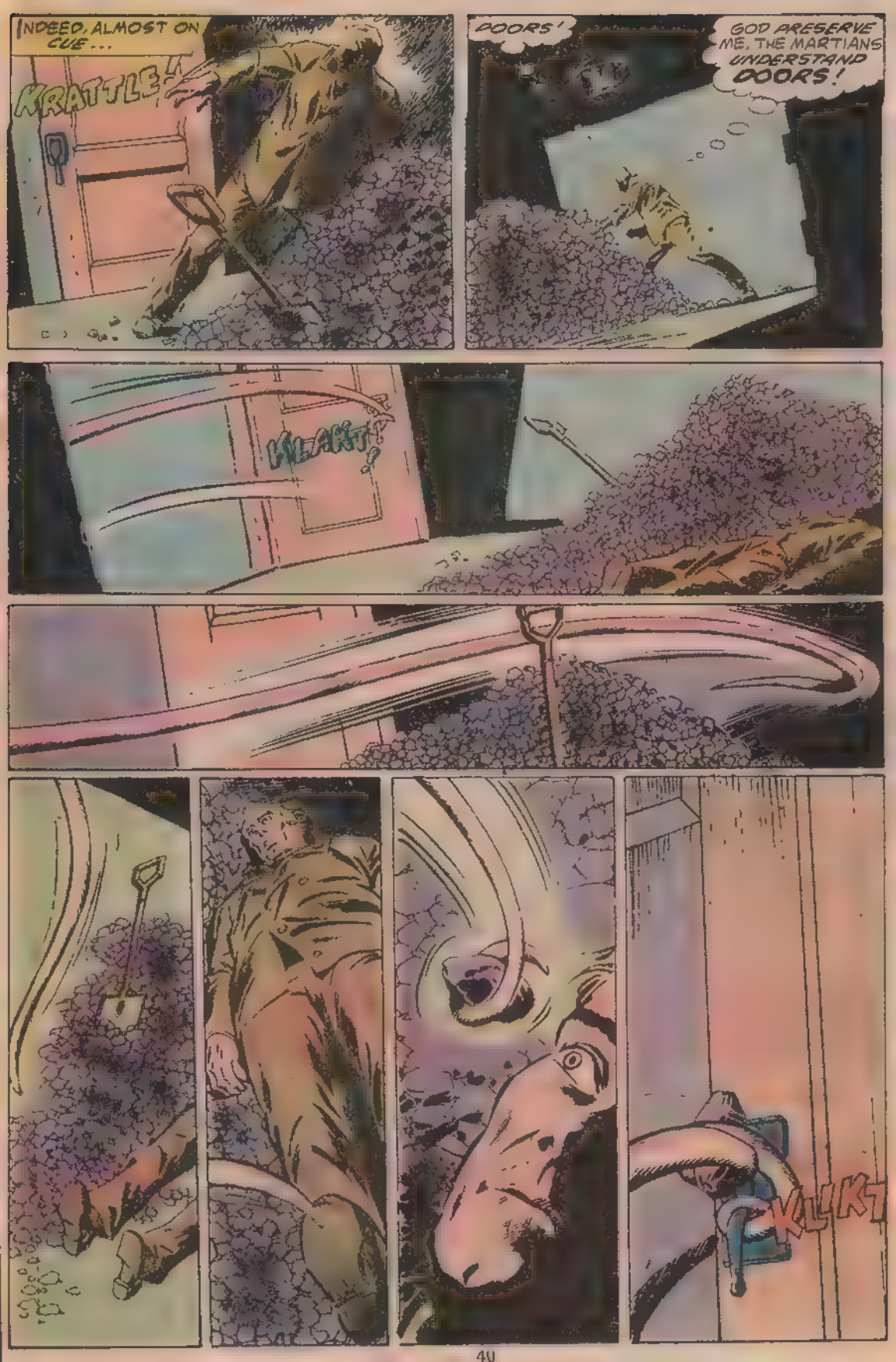

I ALSO HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE THE MARTIANS THEMSELVES AS THEY WORKED TO CONQUER MAN AND HIS EARTH...
...THEIR INCREDIBLE BRAINS, THE FLACCID BODY, MULTI-TALENTED, INDEPENDENTLY CONTROLLABLE TENTACLES LIVE FOR HANDS AND LEGS (THOUGH THE LATTER ONLY ON MARS

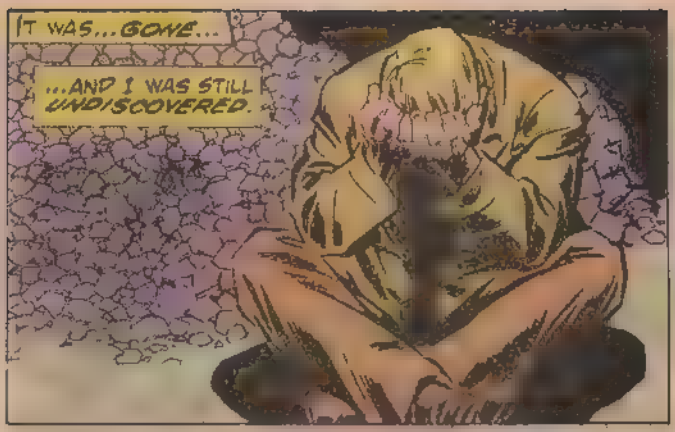

THERE WAS EVIDENCE THAT EARTH'S GRAVITY AND DENSER ATMOSPHERE WAS CAUSING THE INVADERS PULMONARY DISTRESS..
...BUT THAT ONLY SLOWED THEM DOWN. THEY NEVER GOT TIRED AND THEY NEVER SLEPT, DOING TWENTY-FOUR HOURS WORK EVERY TWENTY-FOUR HOURS

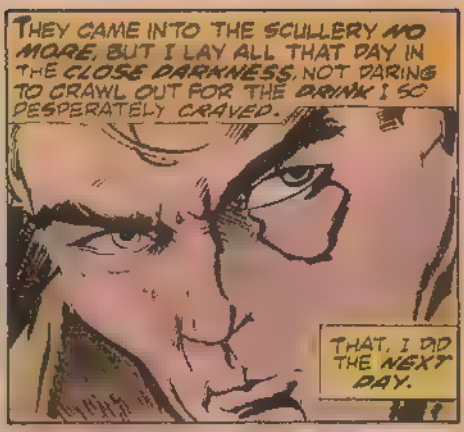

NOT BEING A MARTIAN, THOUGH, I WAS RESTING -- THE CURATE WATCHING OUT OUR TINY WINDOW --
...WHEN THE FIRST MEN WERE BROUGHT INTO THE PIT.

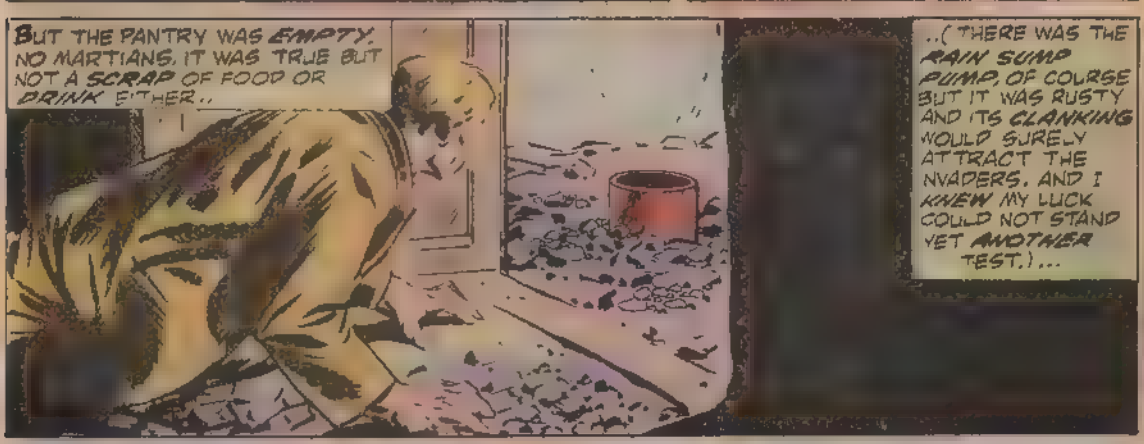

THEY'RE MONSTERS .. MONSTERS....!
GOD HAVE MERCY ON US ALL--WE ARE IN THE HANDS OF FIENDS FROM THE FOULEST PITS OF HELL!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING MAN?! WHAT'S OUT THERE?
DEATH IS OUT THERE! HE HAS COME FOR US!
BE QUIET, YOU FOOL! THEY'LL HEAR YOU!
I SAID-
BE QUIET!
SOK
IN THE EARLY EVENING TWILIGHT I SAW A MAN WHO LOOKED TO HAVE BEEN OF CONSIDERABLE MEANS BEFORE THE MARTIANS CAME...
HE WAS SCRAMBLING UP THE SLOPE OF THE PIT TOWARDS OUR WINDOW (FOR A MOMENT I THOUGHT HE'D SEEN T--AND ME!)
...STARK TERROR ON HIS FACE, THE MARTIANS CHEERING HIM ON WITH GLEEFUL HOOTING.
THEN, THE MARTIANS EVIDENTLY DECIDED THAT THEY'D HAD ENOUGH OF THIS TOY--OR, PERHAPS, THEY'D SIMPLY GOTTEN HUNGRY.
NNOOOOOOOOO!
WHATEVER THE REASON, THE MAN'S TIME WAS UP.
THEIR NEXT VICTIM WAS A YOUNG BOY.
I ACTUALLY SAW THE MARTIANS FEEDING OFF HIS JUST-BUTCHERED CORPSE. AND I WONDERED IF THIS WAS TO BE MY FATE, THE FATE OF ALL MANKIND... TO BE NO MORE THAN CATTLE BOUND FOR AN ALIEN SLAUGHTERHOUSE.

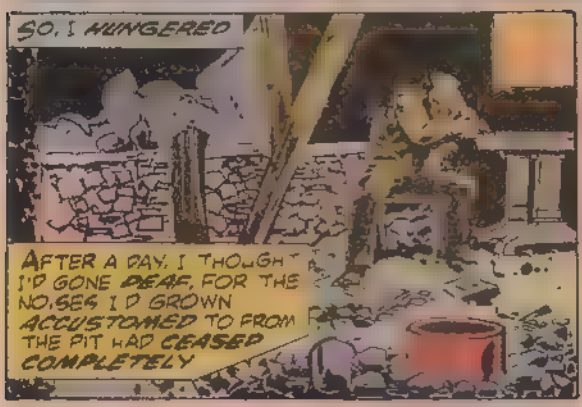

THANKS TO THE CURATE I ALMOST GOT AN ANSWER--IN A PURELY PERSONAL SENSE, ANYWAY.
T S JUST O GOD! E HAVE SINNED E HAVE FALLEN SHORT-- AND THOU HAST FOUND S OUT!
BE STILL-- THEY'LL HEAR YOU
I HAVE BEEN STILL TOO LONG, AND NOW I MUST BEAR WITNESS! TO THIS C TO THE INHABITANTS OF EARTH--!
SHUT UP -OR GOD'S SAKE--
NAY, SPEAK THE WORD OF THE LORD S UPON ME! I MUST BEAR MY WITNESS! I GO T HAS ALREADY BEEN TOO LONG DELAYED!!
NO!
THOK!
YOU.. MADMAN YOU MAY HAVE DOOMED US BOTH!
KRATCH
THAT SOUND--!?
N THE WINDOW-- A MARTIAN!
GOT TO GET AWAY!
BUT QUIETLY, MAN-- MAKE NO SOUND NOW OR YOU'RE LOST!
MAYBE IT DIDN'T SEE ME--I CAN HEAR IT DRAGGING THE CURATE'S BODY AWAY...
POOR OLD FELLOW; I DIDN'T MEAN TO HIT-- OH MY GOD!
IF THEY EXAMINE THE WOUND ON HIS HEAD, THEY'LL KNOW HE WAS STRUCK VIOLENTLY FROM BEHIND. THAT THERE ARE TWO OF US DOWN HERE!

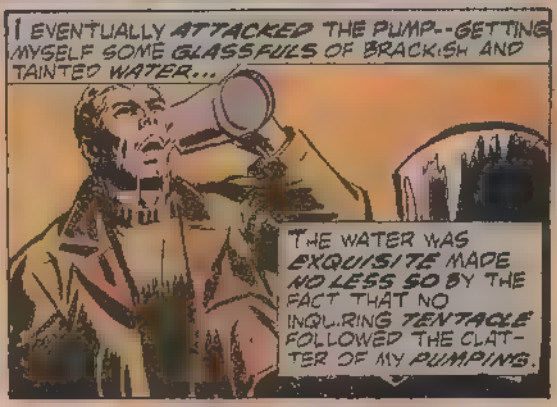

INDEED, ALMOST ON CUE...
KRATTLE!
DOORS!
GOD PRESERVE ME, THE MARTIANS UNDERSTAND DOORS!
KLAKT!
KLIKT

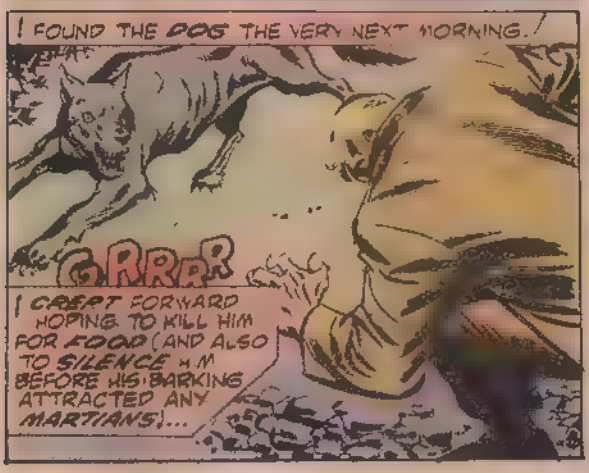

IT WAS...GONE...
...AND I WAS STILL UNDISCOVERED.

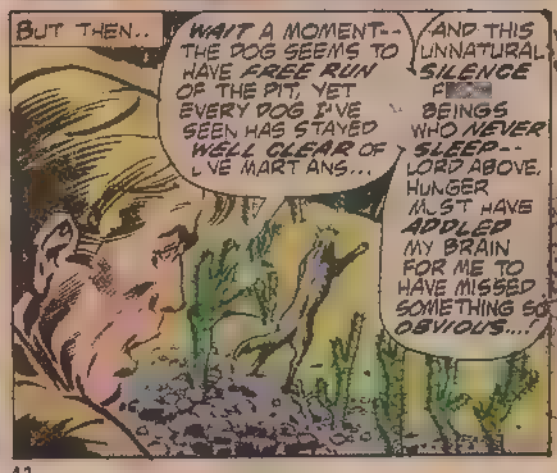

THEY CAME INTO THE SCULLERY NO MORE, BUT I LAY ALL THAT DAY IN THE CLOSE DARKNESS, NOT DARING TO CRAWL OUT FOR THE DRINK I SO DESPERATELY CRAVED.
THAT, I DID THE NEXT DAY.

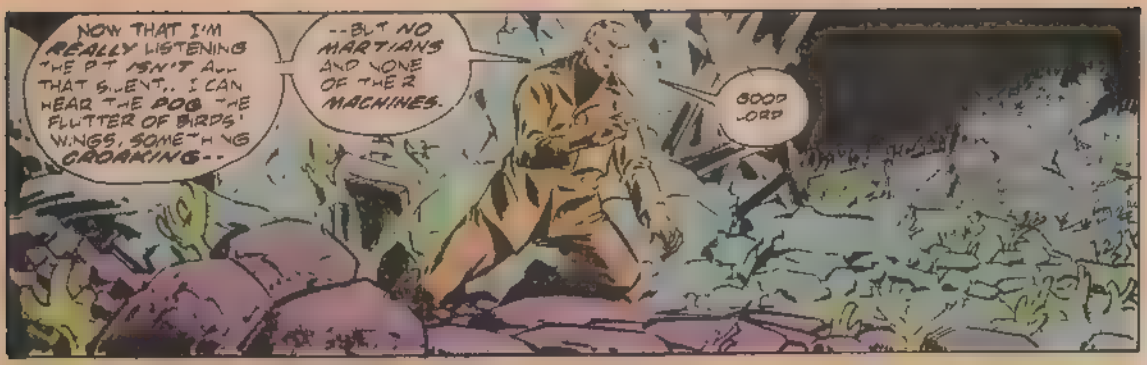

BUT THE PANTRY WAS EMPTY. NO MARTIANS, IT WAS TRUE BUT NOT A SCRAP OF FOOD OR DRINK EITHER..
..(THERE WAS THE RAIN SUMP PUMP, OF COURSE BUT IT WAS RUSTY AND ITS CLANKING WOULD SURELY ATTRACT THE NVADERS. AND I KNEW MY LUCK COULD NOT STAND YET ANOTHER TEST.)...


SO, I HUNGERED
AFTER A DAY, I THOUGH I'D GONE DEAF, FOR THE NOISES I'D GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO FROM THE PIT HAD CEASED COMPLETELY


I EVENTUALLY ATTACKED THE PUMP--GETTING MYSELF SOME GLASSFULS OF BRACKISH AND TAINTED WATER...
THE WATER WAS EXQUISITE MADE NO LESS SO BY THE FACT THAT NO INQUIRING TENTACLE FOLLOWED THE CLATTER OF MY PUMPING.


I FOUND THE DOG THE VERY NEXT MORNING.
GRRRR
I CREPT FORWARD HOPING TO KILL HIM FOR FOOD (AND ALSO TO SILENCE HIM BEFORE HIS BARKING ATTRACTED ANY MARTIANS)...


BUT THEN..
WAIT A MOMENT-- THE DOG SEEMS TO HAVE FREE RUN OF THE PIT, YET EVERY DOG I'VE SEEN HAS STAYED WELL CLEAR OF THE MARTIANS...
AND THIS UNNATURAL SILENCE FROM BEINGS WHO NEVER SLEEP-- LORD ABOVE, HUNGER MUST HAVE ADDLED MY BRAIN FOR ME TO HAVE MISSED SOMETHING SO OBVIOUS...!


NOW THAT I'M REALLY LISTENING THE PIT ISN'T ALL THAT SILENT.. I CAN HEAR THE FOG THE FLUTTER OF BIRDS' WINGS, SOMETHING CROAKING--
--BUT NO MARTIANS AND NONE OF THEIR MACHINES.
GOOD LORD

PART V

THE END OF THE INVADERS

THE REASON FOR THE SILENCE NOW BECAME OBVIOUS-- THE MARTIANS HAD GONE STOLEN AWAY DAYS AGO...
..LEADING THIS GREAT PIT TO THE DEAD AND THE EATERS OF THE DEAD
I HAD HIDDEN ALL THOSE DAYS STARVED AND THIRSTED MYSELF--NEARLY DIED OF FEAR--FOR NOTHING

FOR THE LONGEST TIME, I JUST **STOOD** THERE--**TOTTERING** ON THE MOUND REGARDLESS OF MY **SAFETY**--STARING AT THE PIT AND THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE IN **AMAZEMENT**.

I HAD **EXPECTED** TO FIND SHEEN IN RUINS--BUT **NOT** TO FIND MYSELF SURROUNDED BY THE WEIRD AND **LURID** LANDSCAPE OF **ANOTHER PLANET**.

I FELT AS A **RABBIT** MIGHT FEEL, RETURNING TO HIS BURROW AND **CONFRONTED** WITH THE WORK OF A DOZEN BUSY NAVVIES DIGGING THE **FOUNDATION** OF A HOUSE

..THAT I WAS **NO LONGER** THE MASTER HERE, BUT AN **ANIMAL** AMONG ANIMALS UNDER THE **MARTIAN HEEL**.

STRANGE--AND **NUMBLING**--THAT THE **EMPIRE OF MAN** SHOULD PASS AWAY IN **TWO WEEKS TIME**

AS I VERY NEARLY **PASSED AWAY** MYSELF. HOWEVER AFTER **MUCH EFFORT**, I MANAGED TO CLIMB OUT OF THE PIT, AND LATER TO FIND SOME **VEGETABLES** IN A NEARBY GARDEN.

MY HUNGER **EASED**, I DECIDED TO HEAD TOWARDS **LONDON** HOPING TO FIND SOME SIGN OF **LIVING MAN**...

..BUT ALL I SAW WAS THE THAMES **CHOKED** AND **OVER-RUN** BY THIS RED **ALIEN** GROWTH.

THE WEED SEEMED TO **THRIVE** ON WATER AND IT HAD TURNED THE WHOLE OF THE **THAMES VALLEY** INTO SOME VAST PRIMEVAL **CRIMSON SWAMP**.

I WANDERED ON, FINDING **NO SIGN** OF MARTIANS--BUT NONE OF **MAN**, EITHER.

I CAME TO BELIEVE THAT MANKIND WAS **NO MORE** UPON THIS EARTH, AND THAT I STOOD **ALONE**, THE **LAST MAN LEFT ALIVE**!

I SLEPT THAT NIGHT IN THE *INN* THAT STANDS ATOP PUTNEY H..., SLEEPING IN A *MADE BED* FOR THE *FIRST* TIME SINCE MY FLIGHT TO *LEATHERHEAD*.

IT WAS NOT A *PLEASANT* SLEEP THOUGH MY DREAMS *TORN* W.TH MEMOR ES OF THE DEAD CURATE AND OF MY M SSING *WIFE*.

THE MORNING DAWNED *BRIGHT* AND *FINE*--MADE E.EN *MORE* PLEASANT BY MY DISCOVERY OF A *TIN OF BISCUITS* N THE SERVANT'S Q..ARTERS

Slam

MY "*MEAL*" DONE, I STARTED INTO LONDON W TH THE A M OF DETERM NING PREC SELY *WHAT* HAD HAPPENED DURING MY *INCARCERA-TION* IN THE CELLAR.

ONCE I'D FOUND *THAT* OUT, I WAS DETERMINED TO PRESS ON TO LEATHERHEAD AND FIND OUT--*ONCE AND FOR ALL*--THE FATE OF MY W.FE.

I HAD NO REAL HOPES OF HER HAVING *SURVIVED* THE HOLOCAUST. FOR, I'D HEARD IN *WEYBRIDGE* THAT A FIGHTING MACHINE HAD *LEVELLED* THE VILLAGE WITH ITS HEAT-RAY...

...FOR WHAT SEEMED TO BE NO MORE THAN THE *FUN* OF T.

HOW MANY L..ES HAD *ENDED* SINCE THAT FATEFUL WEEK-END, I WONDERED. HOW MANY *CASUAL TRA-GEDIES*, HOW MUCH *SUFFER-ING*?

GREEN GROCER MALDEN

DO WE APPEAR THIS WAY TO THE *ANTS* WHOSE NESTS WE *CRUSH*...?

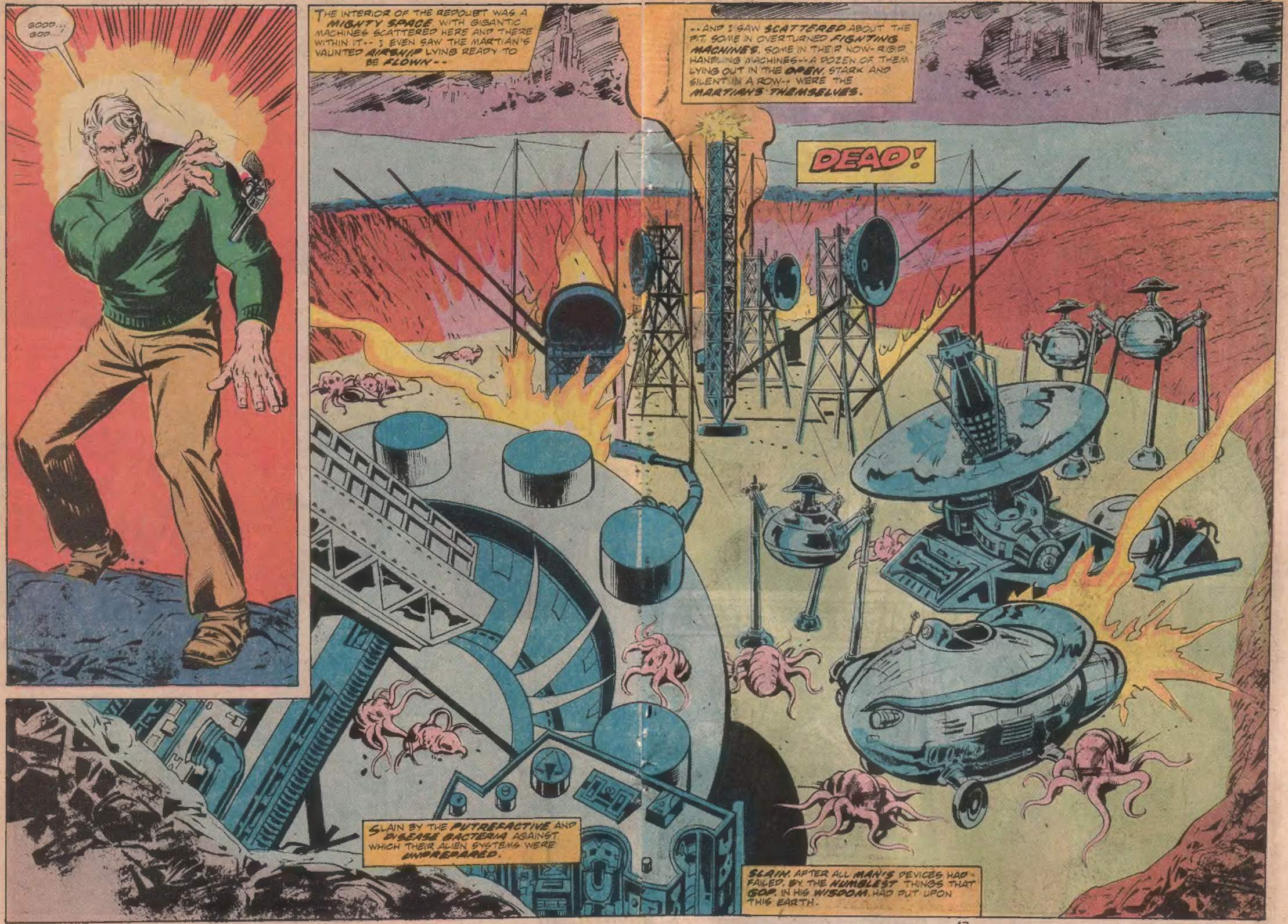
VENGEFUL *GODS* WHO WREAK DESTRUCTION ON OUR LESSER FELLOWS FOR *NO REASON*? OR BECAUSE SOME *HAVIM* HAS TEMPTED US TO DO IT?

BUT I *FORGET*--TO THE MARTIANS, WE WERE *EDIBLE* ANTS.

HOWEVER ONE LOOKED AT IT WE WERE F.NISHED DONE *BEATEN*--I REMEMBERED TH NK NG THAT THE N GHT THE *FIRST* CYL NDER LANDED AND *SCOFFING* AT MY FEAR.

I KNEW *BETTER* NOW.

THAT NIGHT I MET THE ARTILLERY SERGEANT I'D KNOWN EARLIER IN THE WAR. HE TOO HAD ESCAPED THE DISASTER AT WEYBRIDGE--
--AND I SPENT THE EVENING LISTENING TO HIS PLANS FOR A RESISTANCE MOVEMENT AGAINST THE MARTIANS. BUT THE MORE I LISTENED THE MORE I REALIZED THAT HIS PLANS WERE TALK AND NOTHING MORE.
THE NEXT MORNING I LEFT HIM.
AND PRESENTLY I REACHED LONDON PROPER. A CITY LARGELY UNTOUCHED BY THIS WAR OF THE WORLDS. A CITY WITHOUT PEOPLE.
I FOUND A NUMBER OF BODIES-- AND ONE LIVE (IF YOU COULD CALL THAT DRUNKARD. I KEPT ON
NOT SURE OF PRECISELY WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR ONLY THAT I WAS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING.
IT WAS IN SOUTH KENSINGTON THAT I FIRST HEARD THE HOWLING.
WHAT--?
SOUNDS LIKE A DOG. SOMETHING IN PAIN. COMING FROM THE NORTH, TOO, FROM THAT FIGHTING MACHINE?
I GREW STEADILY IN VOLUME AS I HEADED NORTHWARDS.
GOOD LORD! IT'S A HANDLING MACHINE. AND FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS IT WAS OUT OF CONTROL WHEN IT--IT--IT'S BUILDING
IT ALSO LOOKS LIKE ITS MARTIAN MASTER DIDN'T SURVIVE THE IMPACT.
A DEAD MARTIAN! WE'VE THERE ARE NO SIGNS OF LIFE! SO NOW WHERE?
WAIT-- THE HOWL!
IT'S STOPPED!
THE SUDDEN SILENCE STRUCK LIKE A THUNDERCLAP.
THE SERGEANT SAID THE MARTIAN'S MAIN BASE WAS HERE IN REGENT'S PARK AND THIS IS WHERE THE HOWLING'S BEEN COMING FROM.
SOMETHING'S HAPPENING TO THEM-- I KNOW IT-- AND, FOOL THAT I AM I'VE GOT TO SEE WHAT..


GOOD... GOD...!
THE INTERIOR OF THE REDOUBT WAS A MIGHTY SPACE, WITH GIGANTIC MACHINES SCATTERED HERE AND THERE WITHIN IT-- I EVEN SAW THE MARTIAN'S VAUNTED AIRSHIP LYING READY TO BE FLOWN--
--AND I SAW SCATTERED ABOUT THE PIT, SOME IN OVERTURNED FIGHTING MACHINES, SOME IN THEIR NOW-RIGID HANDLING MACHINES--A DOZEN OF THEM LYING OUT IN THE OPEN, STARK AND SILENT IN A ROW-- WERE THE MARTIANS THEMSELVES.
DEAD!
SLAIN BY THE PUTREFACTIVE AND DISEASE BACTERIA AGAINST WHICH THEIR ALIEN SYSTEMS WERE UNPREPARED.
SLAIN, AFTER ALL MAN'S DEVICES HAD FAILED, BY THE HUMBLEST THINGS THAT GOD, IN HIS WISDOM, HAD PUT UPON THIS EARTH.

EPILOGUE

I SPENT THE NEXT FEW DAYS AT THE HOME OF A KINDLY COUPLE WHO'D FOUND ME WANDERING, DELIRIOUS, IN ST. JOHN'S WOOD...

...BEFORE--MY HEALTH AND STRENGTH RESTORED--I RETURNED HOME TO WOKING.

I STILL HAD HARBOURED SOME HOPE OF FINDING MY DEAR WIFE...

...BUT OUR HOUSE WAS EMPTY. EVERYTHING JUST AS IT HAD BEEN THAT HAD SATURDAY SO LONG AGO. WHEN AN INVASION FROM MARS HAD COME CRASHING DOWN UPON ALL OUR HEADS.

BUT WHILE MANKIND HAD SURVIVED, I WAS ALONE.

...MORE FEARFULLY ALONE THAN WHEN I'D THOUGHT MYSELF THE ONLY PERSON LEFT ALIVE ON EARTH.

IT'S NO USE. THE HOUSE IS DESERTED. NO ONE HAS BEEN HERE THESE PAST TEN DAYS.

DO NOT STAY HERE TO TORMENT YOURSELF.

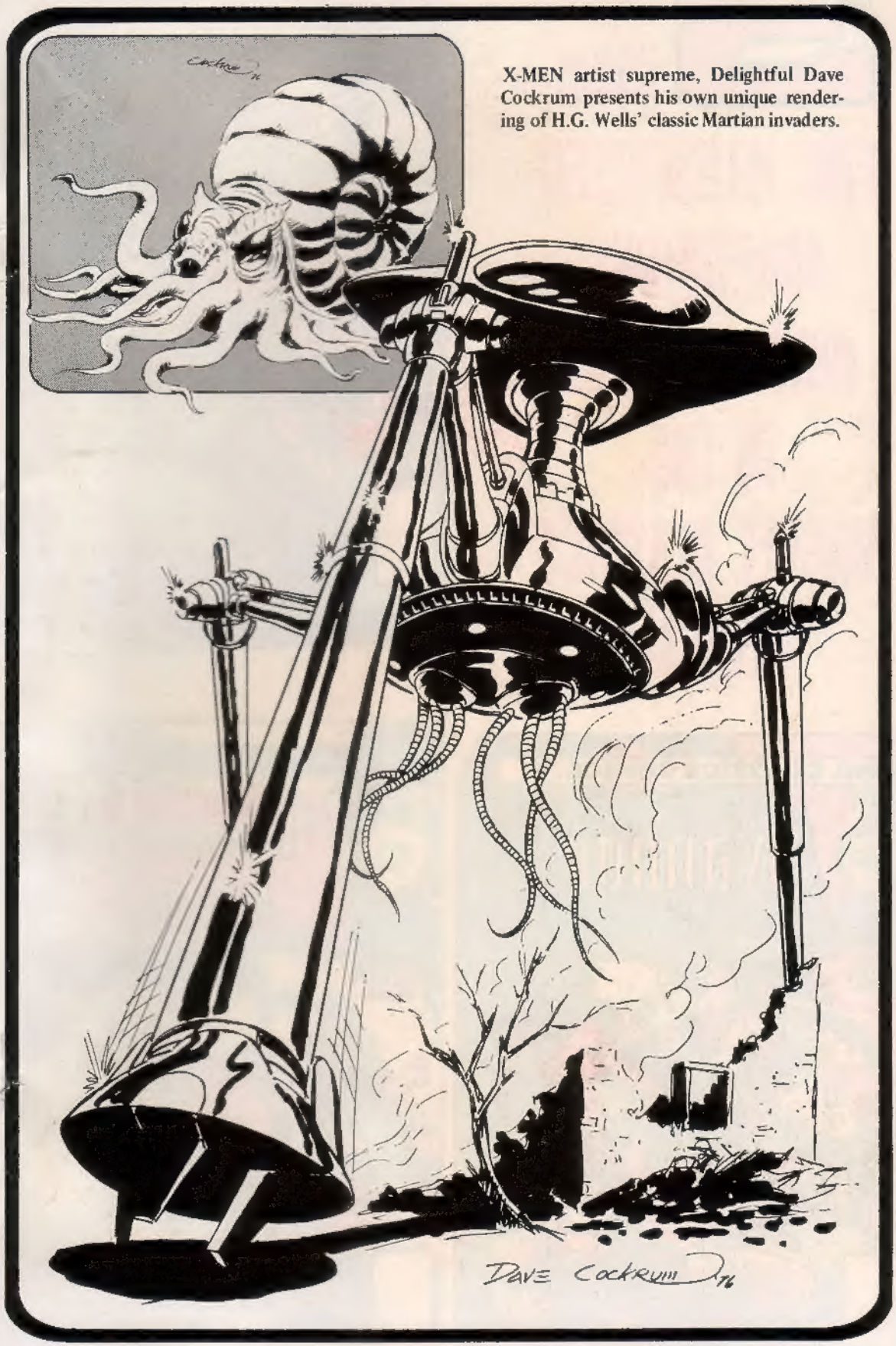
NO ONE ESCAPED BUT YOU.

GEORGE!?

I CAME. I KNEW--I KNEW!

MY TALE IS COMPLETE NOW. A STRANGE TALE OF MANY STRANGE EVENTS. BUT STRANGEST OF ALL IS TO HOLD MY DEAR WIFE ONCE AGAIN.

...AND KNOW THAT I HAVE COUNTED HER, AS SHE HAS COUNTED ME, AMONG THE DEAD.



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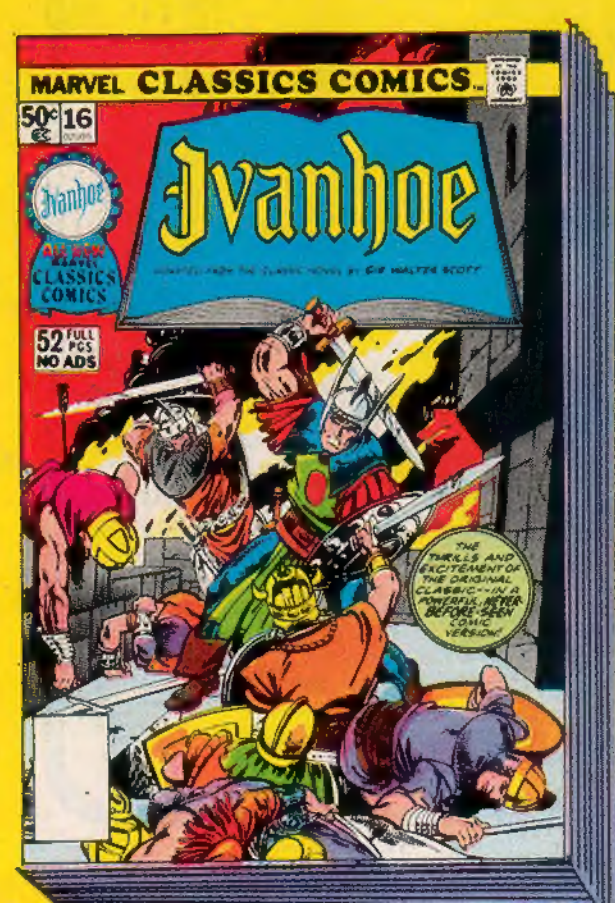
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